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See inside for the tasks of Marxism in the U.S.

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RADICAL AMERICA

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Editors' Introduction

With this number, Radical America ends another period of its existence. The changes which will become increasingly clear over the next several issues have been made possible by the gradual unfolding of a class militancy unknown in its intensity for a generation; our transfer from Madison to the East Coast; and, related to both, our development toward a fuller Marxist world-view.

Radical America's birth in 1967 was conditioned on the one hand by the existence of SDS in its prime; and on the other by the general indifference among SDS (and other radical) intellectuals toward the specific nature of American radicalism. Thus the name: an affirmation of the existence of a radical America, whose past seemed (for better or worse) very familiar to the theoretically indifferent, activist politics of radical college youth in that period. At first, RA was narrowly calculated to "find the answers" in the mistakes of past radicals. Only gradually did it emerge that almost no one knew the questions. In Madison, Wisconsin, a kind of mid-Sixties mecca for intellectual campus Marxism, RA's editorial scope broadened. Perhaps archetypically American and New Left, it was the only Marxist journal in the world to produce a comic book as one number (Volume 3, Number 1) and the first American journal since the 1940s to devote a full number to Surrealism (Volume 4, Number 1). As the New Left went into crisis and collapse, RA's second notion emerged: that it would speak to the long-range task of laying the foundations for a new movement that would finally come into existence when the confusion and discouragement of the current one faded. The mode of expression taken by RA was a series of monographs,

nearly all methodological in nature, published over 1970.

At last this orientation proved inadequate: There was neither the internal coherence nor the external demand from former and current Movement people who read RA to justify the continuation of a monograph series. Thus, the first functioning editorial board of RA was convened last fall, to provide a clearer if more narrow focus. RA in its third notion was transformed into a journal largely concerned with the history, development, and prospects of the American working class (and of the European working class, especially as it shed light on possible future developments here). As such, RA gained a self-recognition and also some recognition of an audience of activists interested or involved in the class developments in their gestation period.

The existence of an independent (organizationally unaffiliated) radical journal implies the view by the editors of the inadequacy of existing Marxist thought and/or practice. RA has believed itself to be a journal for the creation of a view adequate to modern conceptions — the whole of modern life — pointing toward a conception of the world which Marxism since Marx has almost consistently lacked, but which is more than ever obligatory for informed practice. RA will now seek the next logical step in its development: the combining of the full implications of a methodological critique with the class critique of its latest phase, introducing explicitly and in avowed political terms what Marxism must become.

The appearance of CLR James' work in the context of our preparation for the leap ahead should be no surprise to regular RA readers. More than the work of any other living figure, James' efforts to render Marxism an all-sided theory and practice has served as an example and an encouragement. The "CLR James Anthology" (RA Volume 4, Number 4) sought

to convey the breadth of James' labor from the American working class to cricket, from Lenin to literature. Here we offer a more specifically political selection, reflecting James' status as a major Third World Marxist theorist. James' best-known work, Black Jacobins, was a depiction of the San Domingo revolt of the 1790s, but more than that: It portrayed the relation of the Third World to the developed nations in the revolutionary process. In that first stage of modern revolution, the black field workers' revolt, led by Toussaint L'Ouverture, demolished a mighty French army under Lafayette, and aided the success of French revolutionary forces; and the proclamation of the Republic equally contributed to the triumph of the ex-slaves in Haiti. Nearly two hundred years later, it has been belatedly discovered by Western Marxism as a whole that the Third World striving for self-liberation is a catch-spring for release of potentially revolutionary working-class forces for decades contained by Imperialism. James expresses the intimacy of the relations of workers and peasants across thousands of miles by showing the direct relevance of Hegel's "Slave-Master Relationship" (applied by Marx to the Western working class) to all struggles, including that of the Vietnamese. And uniquely, James seeks not merely to preserve but to extend and expand upon Lenin's understanding of world revolutionary forces, far more important for James than the theory of the Party which "Leninists" and "anti-Leninists" alike have seized upon as Lenin's major contribution.

At last, James shows, activity grows where only theory could promise in the past. Along with Du Bois, George Padmore, and a handful of others, James was a figure of enormous stature in the expression of notions that were to be encompassed in the African anti-colonial struggles. Now a young black man in America, who spends a quarter of his life in prison's solitary confinement, can give voice with tremendous

eloquence to the forces at the center of the civilization which cry aloud for self-realization. This reality is a vindication of James' own theoretical method, which has focused on the activity of the masses of people rather than the competition of the sects for Lenin's mantle. More important, the valorous existence of George Jackson is the best evidence of James' conclusion that we have reached perhaps a "decisive and final stage" in the world revolutionary process. Whether Socialism or Barbarism lie ahead, we cannot persist for many decades in our present situation.

The "Propositions" fit naturally into the context of James' writing, for although independently conceived, they could not have been offered in their current form without the perceptions of modern society that James has offered. The central features of mass struggle in the United States are familiar to all: the unique pattern of class activity shaped by increasingly innovative technology (and its physical and psychological demands on the worker); the particularly important role played by Third World forces and by women in the social life of the nation and thereby in the work force; the distortion of class initiatives within Imperial society and the partial unloosening of the forces of motion with Imperialism's partial decay; the birth and beginning fragmentation of mass culture in the Twentieth Century; and, reflecting all these, the difficulties and opportunities posed for unalienated forms of organized struggle within the emerging mass movements. The inter-relations of these various tendencies remain, however, shrouded in political mystery. The Propositions should be seen as no more than a transitional means to clarify the writer's understanding and to encourage discussion around the basic themes. If well-based, these notions will re-emerge in more substantial form within RA, as greater self-consciousness and a grander view of the world are gained.

C.L.R. James, I

Peasants and Workers

The following consists of two major excerpts from "The Gathering Forces", written in 1967 as a draft for a document to appear on the fiftieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution. Never published, this abortive document was to be the third major statement of the positions of James' group (following State Capitalism and World Revolution *in 1949, and* Facing Reality *in 1958). Sections of our excerpts were written by Martin Glaberman, William Gorman and George Rawick in collaboration with James.*

Preface

A three-way division of affairs among Russia, China, and the United States dominates world politics today. Two nations out of these three are governed, according to their official declarations, by the theories and practices of Marxism-Leninism. The human consciousness must inescapably satisfy itself with answers to the questions: What exactly is this all about and how did it come to be? Has it always been so, and, if not, when and how did such a state of affairs take place?

Prospects of war and peace, budgets, armies, parties, elections, trade and cultural exchanges, the United Nations, and the Third World of emerging nations, are all entangled. Hundreds of millions cover their eyes and, sick of the dehumanization of civilized society, shut off news of interminable and unsolvable conflict between Russia and China on the one side, and American attempts to dominate the world on the other.

What is being awaited is a consummation of what began with the breakup of the Eastern Front in World War I: the arrival of the populace politically onto the streets of Petrograd and Moscow. The October Revolution of 1917 was the initial landmark on the landscape of war and revolution, mass initiative and class repressions, self-liberating efforts and alienating mystifications. A breaking point in human existence began in October 1917 and now awaits resolution. After Stalinism, Khrushchevism, and the bewildering profundities of Chairman Mao, the present generation is suffused with the desire to arrive at the terminal point of the Twentieth Century political upheavals.

In the same Russia today, October is celebrated by self-congratulations accompanied by displays of the latest missiles, tanks, and rockets. The United States — while still declaring how it deplores the rise of Bolshevism — compares the mellowness of the present Russian leaders with the intransigence of the Chinese. Furthermore, an event which, upon its happening, had made bright man's hopes is now used as an occasion to insist that the great majorities of the populations cannot alter or improve their conditions of life.

Fifty years ago, the October Revolution made mankind aware of the task placed in the hands of the proletariat: destroying the accepted, constantly increasing evils of capitalist society. Today there has emerged a new force to join the proletariat, comprising hundreds of millions. This force is engaged in the struggle to rid contemporary society of the incubus which weighs upon it and which threatens to destroy mankind itself by fratricidal struggles for power. This force is the people of the Third World, whose liberation is possible only by the destruction of the economic and cultural domination of imperialism. For us who celebrate the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution this political emergence of

the Third World is a culmination of what emerged from theory into reality in October 1917.

What is new in our analysis will concern itself above all with the emergence of this new form which struggles to complete what the October Revolution began. But it is necessary, first and foremost, to understand what was the October Revolution, what it did and what it did not do.

OCTOBER

War is the mother of revolution. Everywhere revulsion was the logical response to three years of trench mud and carnage, only in Russia did world war give birth to completely volcanic social reorganization. Strict objectivity compels not a mere listing of reasons but a statement of premises.

The largest factory known in the world anywhere in the year 1917 was the Putilov works in Leningrad. The co-ordinate labor of that factory involved 40,000 people. Other factories surrounded it in the same district. Capital had put them there. The backwardness of transport in the large mass of land area that is Russia geographically concentrated the forces of the Russian workers socially. The Russian autocracy and its secret police, fearful of the slightest liberalizing influences from European civilization, set up the strictest barriers as a means of self-protection and self-perpetuation. This in turn gave to the Russian working class a certain inner freedom from inhibiting traditionalism and organizational fixity, and mere imitation of the rest of Europe. There was no exclusivism of trade unions, arbitration machinery, grievance umpires, or pettyfogging about "equity".

Compared to Russian society as a whole, the number of industrial workers was small. The bulk of the workers were one or two generations away from the land, from social isolation on the vastest countryside in all the world. But the working class was fresh.

It was as if the inner class life of the American working class had begun with the CIO, or that of their British working-class brothers had begun with the movement of shop stewards.

Class power, combined with the creative appropriation by the Russian intelligentsia of the discoveries of Western civilization before and particularly after 1789, was the specific potential of the new industrial working class. Class paralysis in the face of the traditional brutishness of the Russian aristocracy capped by a Czar was the specific immediate reaction of the small Russian bourgeoisie. They were dominated, in their minds if not completely in fact, by foreign capital.

Both bourgeoisie and working class were small in peasant Russia. The future could not even believe in itself in that war period of a royal family guided by the monk Rasputin at the center of power.

The intelligentsia, which, unlike that of other countries, did not automatically ally itself with the class above, moved through the exacting discipline of the politics of an approaching revolution to define its relation to the new working class.

Viewed from the standpoint of the development of civilization — mankind's capacity to understand itself and its prospects — the work of the Russian intelligentsia constitutes one of the wonders of the world. The brilliance of the intellectuals was due to their European strivings at a time when German philosophy, French literature, and British politics were stagnant. The transition from the Nineteenth to the Twentieth Century in what is broadly called culture is in the great achievements of the phenomenal Russian intelligentsia. In drama, novel, ballet, poetry, literary criticism, musical expressiveness, they transformed the relations of the Nineteenth to the Twentieth Century. The constitutive elements of an entire epoch were created. No proof in the conventional meaning of that word will be offered here. In

the dialectic of the actual development, including the politics of the later stage, that of the degeneration of the 1917 revolution, politics offers the historical proof.

One more point must be made. The entrance of bourgeois economy into Russia did not so much weaken as accentuate the caste character of Russian social life. It is comparable to how in the United States the very triumph of the powerful captains of industry refastened more perniciously the manacles and even the lynch mob's rope onto the Negro emancipated by the Civil War. Class reinforced itself administratively as caste. Russia was familiarly known

to the world as the prison house of peoples. This was not only because its pre-1917 existence was the closest to a police state that period could recognize. It was so because of the variety of people and ethnic groups within the country itself forbidden the use of

their own language or native institutions.

We can thus help to resolve the mystery as to why October is Russian. Its resistant intelligentsia was European, its working class small but with a concentration unique in European history, its minorities lived in the recesses of the inner colonialism of Czarist power. This all together was the nurturing ground of what is called Bolshevism. When the war came in 1914, despite the fact that a full theoretical understanding had to await Lenin's great achievements during the war, these Bolshevik enclaves did not succumb as did the Social Democracy everywhere to imperialism, the bourgeoisification of skilled workers, the corruptions of the parliamentary system, the great war of all the nation states.

There was a corresponding development in the relationship between the working class and its representative party, which found the source for its strength in the experiences of the factory and the workers' districts. The revolutionary creations and the experiences of 1905 were the curtain raiser for the victory of 1917. The defeat of the military pretensions of the Czar in the 1904-1905 war against Japan stimulated the workers — as the defeat of rulers has stimulated the oppressed populations since time immemorial — to the measures which went far beyond anything West Europe had known: the general strike, the political general strike, and finally the creation of Councils — the Soviets.

When the Soviet appeared it consisted of one representative for every five hundred workers in a factory. The peasants, organized in the Army, started to form Soviets for themselves. The rapid formation of the Soviets, lightning-like progress of strikes, and armed extension of struggle tell us things which no experts on the theory of the powerlessness of permanently alienated populations dare even to think. Soviets and general strike did not wait upon any party. Parties attached to the cause of the working class

had to adapt themselves to Soviets while no wise giving up the aspirations to democratic rights and elections of representatives to government in the familiar bourgeois manner. 1917 provided the final curtain to the historical stage opening in 1905. The ruling class no longer had any claim of leading the Russian nation or even showing any capacity of disciplining its own hollow personnel. Soldiers fled the front and the trial of strength began.

Both the present American and Russian rulers believe that the Bolshevik Party made the revolution; the former hold this idea with regrets, and the latter with grandiose self-adulation. The same glaring mental, that is, political, defect displays itself in all sectors of opinion both from those for and those against the Russian Revolution.

Thus, those small vanguard groupings of political radicals who have never had the taste of power ascribe the wonders of its arrival to the power of correct slogans. But Peace, Bread, and Land were not the blare of an advertised uprising. The critical element was a population poised upon split-second's notice to act upon its impulses, not in the everyday sense, but to rescue society from the bottomless pit of trench warfare and state corruption. Slogans make aspirations more palpable, but it is a self-prepared people that make fundamental revolution.

February 1917 witnessed the abdication of the Czar and the formation of what Lenin himself described as the freest republic the world had ever known. The working class was seeking to abolish itself as a mere component cog in the machinery of production, the soldiers were struggling to end the corrupting role in the machinery of war, and the serfs were permeated with the desire to make themselves into an independent yeomanry such as Russia had never seen before. Freedom could no longer be a matter of right. It was the content of human-social activity, above all politics. When you have such large-scale social ex-

perience, infinite in its immeasurability — millions in and out of the battlefront, or out on strike, parading their power through the major streets of cities, transport and communication broken down so that the most ordinary routines of life become a matter to be settled on the spot as necessity dictates — then the establishment of new social ties becomes the most natural and inevitable thing in the world. Sailors of battleships were nestling in the Neva near Petrograd; soldiers had not only deserted, they were moving around on the streets of a major metropolis testing out for what and for whom their military experiences had truly prepared them. It produced the dominant simplicity of the revolutionary politics and even the finished style of its leading politician, that familiar homeliness of Lenin's utterances.

Lenin's style constitutes an enigma and even conspiratorial mystery to what parades itself before our eyes now as social science. Today this science goes round and round with its talk of the paradoxes of the Russians and the inscrutabilities of the even more distant Chinese. The meaning of the social interventions and social transformations of ordinary men and women in the midst of social revolution social scientists evade, leading them to create these mysteries, which lie at the heart of the scientific disciplines created and recreated in confusions.

Kerensky, one of the men of February 1917, may have been a fool to believe he could crate the Russian people back into World War I. More notable for 1967 is the vacillation and self-contortion of the whole section of the intelligentsia. They had tied the fate of Russia to its working class. They proved feckless when it came for the moment to establish the workers, now armed, as the government of the problem-laden, vast, and exhausted Russian society, cut off from Europe and having to depend upon its own internal social resources. The reluctance of Lenin's own co-workers on that famous Central Committee

to adopt the position of seizing the power, of turning February into October, was not cowardice or timidity. The politically trained intelligentsia was not any kind of effete aristocracy.

Its problem — the modern problem — is elsewhere. It is that the bourgeoisie have proven hopelessly ineffectual through depressions and war and calamitous crises of every kind. Only the workers remain to create a human society. But the intelligentsia, which considers itself the repository of everything civilized, must by the very nature of the accumulation of social relations through the centuries as well as immediately all around it, consider the working population to be incapable of facing and solving the problems of governing whole areas of economic, political, and social life.

Lenin was the embodiment of the best virtues of the Russian intelligentsia. This great Russian intelligentsia was European in mental scope, exacting in correctness of formulation and procedure, contemptuous of autocracy and hateful of the pogrom mentality which in the eyes of the world was Mother Russia. But there was a negative as well. An intellectual element of the population so conditioned to exile, so tenuous in its hold on national realities, so ephemeral in regard to its own experience in the practicalities of government, when once congealed into a party apparatus and thereby transformed from isolated individuals into the shadow of the state power it hopes to become, must inevitably turn into — particularly in caste-ridden Russia — an obstacle when the proletariat is ready to assert the full measure of its power.

Why then did Lenin succeed in spite of them ? Not mere individual uniqueness but concrete universality provides the shape of the answer. Aside from being prepared by research and debate on the class character of Russian revolution, aside from the overwhelming homeliness and explicitness of his own political

make-up, aside from the self-discipline that political struggle inheres in individuals as well as in groups, Lenin knew the political alternatives as few people have been pressed and shaped to know them. For in the midst of that eight-month span between February and October, the whole backwash of Russian society and Russian history was preparing to drown the population in the ageless mud of Russian barbarism.

What Lenin knew, and what he knew the soldiers, workers, and peasants knew at the very first hand, was the fist of a Kolchak and a Kornilov, the naked barbarism of the counter-revolution. He knew what native barbarism could do and what mere oratory about freedom could not do. On this he deluded no one because he did not deceive himself as so many highly intelligent people have done not only before Hitler and Mussolini and Stalin but increasingly afterward. The seizure of political power by the working class, the shattering of all centers of authority was to prevent the making of politics into that specialized type of gangsterism so prevalent today that its existence marks off the world before World War I from the way we now live.

Besides the specificity of staying the whip of the counter-revolution, the genius of that much-abused Bolshevism of Lenin is that it added both to the vision and science of revolutionary politics more than all the political science courses in all the world's schools will ever be able to stare at plainly, let alone master as knowledge. Capitalist economy and the great mystery of the commodity over which Marx wrestled for so many pages was to become a matter of specific measures of workers' discipline and national public accounting. Large-scale funds were to be wrested from the parasitic owners by the self-motivated peasants. Only they could do that. Housing, in the absence of new construction, was to be provided by the occupation of unfilled, unused houses in overblown mansions by homeless tenants. Only they

could do that. International diplomacy consisted of the signing away of territories according to the will of the population living there. We cannot go on with this list indefinitely except to say that it is all this which distinguished Bolshevism from its opponent Menshevism.

It is this which distinguishes Bolshevism from all those to this very day and the day after tomorrow who believe that trench warfare for millions is possible, atomic bombs are possible, anti-missile missiles are possible, flights to the moon are possible, atomic disintegration of cities is possible, assassinations of political leaders are possible, all of these are not only possible but actually inevitable, whereas the proletarian seizure of political power is — impossible. It is this which provides the decisive dividing line between self-activity and mere chasing around, the "rat race" in short, on an international plane the gulf between human and subhuman modes of political release. Marxism in the Nineteenth Century demonstrated how the new society is nurtured even amidst the poisonous bosom of the old. Leninism contributed its originality and force to the notion of social-economic reconstruction as the true a priori, the sole a priori of all revolution for the Twentieth Century.

1923: WHAT WENT WRONG

In the Civil War in Russia, the Revolution had defeated the White armies that had been sponsored and supported by West European states, Japan, and the United States. With the defeat of these armies Soviet power now confronted the immense task of reconstructing the national economy in such a way that the new social relations of the revolution would reproduce themselves as viable self-activated institutions. Around these the work activity of the masses of men, women, and youth could be grouped. In order to com-

prehend these struggles of the last years of the Revolution, we must pay very careful attention to the specific problems and events.

"A great universal agrarian revolution was worked out with an audacity unprecedented in any other country, and at the same time, the imagination was lacking to work out a tenth-rate reform in office routine ...." (Lenin, Selected Works, Volume 9, Page 396) Although workers are masters of detail labor, certain tasks were shifted onto professional administrators, or non-professionals aspiring to administer. The habits and methods of the Czarist bureaucracy were continued and deepened by the thousands of carryovers from the old regime and the thousands of new arrivals who copied and furthered their ways.

In all countries the state sees itself as mediator between various sections of the people. That Russian administrators saw their own position that way is quite certain. The problem in the crisis of 1921-1923 was not that the party had to grip together the two halves of the "scissors", the gap between socialized workers and individualized peasants. That anyone still believes this was the heart of the matter is the consequence of certain bureaucratic thought patterns, the heritage of tendencies which Lenin had set himself against.

Lenin in his last years counterposed to state and party the development of the cultural level of the whole population, through policies designed to get the direct involvement of the working population, urban and rural, in the solution of problems. Lenin never believed that there would be any completion of the building of socialism under conditions which approached pre-literary culture on the one side and the fragmented productivity of labor on the other. His approach was that of education but of the kind never seen elsewhere in the world at any time.

The working population had the power: landlords, capitalists, Czarists, and foreign powers all knew

that. But how to develop it? Lenin tied reconstruction of the economy to education. Trade unions were to educate the workers toward that voluntary self-discipline which guarantees a constantly higher productivity. Agricultural co-operatives were to transform a peasantry, conscious of their attainment of individual possession of the land, into free associations of producers on the countryside.

The main task, Lenin said, was "first, of learning, second, of learning, and third, of learning, and then of testing what we have learnt so it shall not remain a dead letter, or a fashionable phrase (and, it is no use concealing it, this often happens among us), so that what we have learnt may become part of our very beings, so that it may actually and fully become a constituent element of our social life." (Selected Works, Volume 9, Page 389) Culture would be taken away from the exclusive position it occupied in old Russia.

But, Lenin continued, "I know that it will be hard to follow this rule and apply it to our conditions. I know that the opposite rule will force its way through a thousand loopholes. I know that enormous resistance will have to be offered, that devilish persistence will have to be displayed, that... the work in this connection will be hellishly hard." (Selected Works, Volume 9, Page 389)

What went wrong in 1923 was that the opposite rule did force its way through a thousand loopholes, leading to a flight from the task of developing a new, revolutionary sophistication completing the transformation of a population set in motion by the revolution. And this was the base for the most extreme atrocities of Stalin which are now known to all the world.

The party of the Russian Revolution did not only fail at this new deep attempt to arouse the social resourcefulness of the population. It abdicated that realm entirely. It fled from it. Until this day such notions as Workers' and Peasants' inspection, where-

by every citizen, particularly the women, in Lenin's memorable phrase, were to examine regularly and systematically and audit the concrete affairs of the Soviet administration; trade unionism as the schooling of workers toward a communist society in which all state coercion disappears; agricultural co-operatives voluntarily formed by the populace in all areas of Russia, are all roundly abused or purposefully ignored, even by the most radical of radicals.

After the Civil War, after the triumph of one party over all others, this flight from the deepening of the revolutionary involvement of the populace accelerated. It was given its signal expression in the trade-union debates of 1920-1921. These debates announced the birth of modern state capital: the rise of governments so total, so peremptory in their attitudes, that they throttle the very notion of mass revolutionary initiative. The large parties which were presumably formed to act on the grievances of large sections of the people became transformed into the disciplinarians of workers, peasants, and all other revolutionary forces.

The particular conflict in 1921 involved Trotsky as chief commander of the victorious Red Army and a small union of Water Transport Workers. Out of this initial conflict came Trotsky's thesis about the subordination of the trade unions to party and state. Trotsky called for "shaking up" the trade unions. Tomsky, the member of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party most concerned with trade-union affairs, fought this off as an attempt at the militarization of the laboring force and of its sole protective organization, the trade unions.

Lenin took the side of Tomsky, and in the next few months it was the Bolshevik Party and not the trade unions which was shaken up by rampant factionalism. In the isolation of the working class in a peasant country combined with the isolation of a workers' Russia in a bourgeois world, it was apparent that

everything accomplished up to then was in absolute peril. "The Russian found consolation for the bleak bureaucratic realities at home in unusually bold theoretical constructions, and that is why these unusually bold theoretical constructions assumed an unusually one-sided character among us." (Selected Works, Volume 9, Page 397)

The solution to the problem of the Russian Revolution was not, as Trotsky demonstrated, in brilliant formulations about more democracy at home in Russia and world revolution abroad. Nor was the solution the liberal theory of a multi-party state.

Lenin modestly noted, but with great powers of anticipation, what would inevitably happen when the mass intervention that was the Russian Revolution would begin to go downhill: "Our social life combines within itself an astonishing degree of fearless audacity and mental timidity...." (Selected Works, Volume 9, Page 394) This mental timidity was in the face of a population that had experienced for itself Soviets, insurrection, and civil war. By swelling the membership of the trade unions, the exhausted working class of an economically exhausted Russia was showing its recognition of where the threat of administrationism had reached and that they were prepared to do battle with it. The main obstacle was the very brilliance of one-sided Russian intellectualism functioning as the political leadership. In reaction to that kind of one-sided bold theoretical construction we have the emergence of Stalin.

Stalin, the party policeman, showed that he had no patience, and that the straitened economic circumstances of post-Civil War Russia allowed for no patience, with the one-sidedness of Russian intellectualism. Instead he chose the most self-specializing aspect of the modern state — the secret police and their penetration into all environs of political activity.

The inherent antagonism which Stalinism offered

to the activity of free human personalities can be seen most specifically when we examine the following lines of Lenin, among the last lines ever to flow from his pen:

"...much that was fantastic, even romantic, and even banal, in the dreams of the old co-operators is now becoming the most unvarnished reality....Our co-operatives are looked down upon with contempt, but those who do so fail to understand the exceptional significance...from the aspect of the transition to the new order by means that will be simplest, easiest, and most intelligible...." (Selected Works, Volume 9, Page 403)

Lenin is speaking here specifically about the peasantry being educated toward co-operation. In the same years he took the position that the trade unions must be schools of the workers which would not only be institutions for the self-protection by the workers against a bureaucratic state apparatus; they would also, as the positive result of struggle, turn into schools of Communist management. And for the youth Lenin was insistent on learning, testing the learning by practice, and furthering the practice by increase of learning.

After the twenty million membership of the Soviets had coalesced with the party or had fallen away entirely from mass participation in government, the task of finding another way forward preoccupied Lenin.

"But this again is the most important thing. It is one thing to draw up fantastic plans for building Socialism by means of all sorts of workers' associations; but it is quite another thing to learn to build it practically, in such a way that every small peasant may take part in the work of construction." (Selected Works, Volume 9, Page 403. Italics in the original.) The conclusive word is "every".

Trotsky was eager for propaganda of the most extreme sort, propaganda combined with purely administrative party orders, army orders. The Soviet technicians were preparing themselves for the day of plans and production quotas. In the meantime Stalin was preparing his blows against specific individuals in the party. The result of all this, in the absence of a unified policy delineated by Lenin, was that the dictatorship swallowed the whole of society. That was Stalin whose arrival tells us of the consequences of an opposite policy and power.

Malenkov, Khrushchev, Brechnev, and Kosygin all have talked of trying to undo what Stalin constructed. What Stalinism established will undo them, and all other heralds of some nebulous great internal reforms in Russia.

Socialized workers of Petrograd and Moscow, socialized peasants of the Russian Army, made the greatest social change the world has ever known. The failure to carry through the same penetration into mass impulse afterward, and at an even higher pitch of social tension, blocked the reconstruction of Russia as a new civilization.

We are often told that Lenin, the man who anticipated and warred against learning as a "dead letter, or a fashionable phrase" produced, or by means of his doctrine produced, a Joseph Stalin. This is revealed for the false notion it is both by the words of Lenin himself and by the figures of how many Leninists Stalin had to kill, the way he had to kill them, the pages that had to be torn out of history books, the sentences that had to be torn out of editions of Lenin's own writings.

Even the work of a Trotsky and his magnificent polemical war could not restrain the spread of the idee fixe that Leninism produced Stalinism. Only comprehension of what took place in October, and of what took place in its failure, can break up that idea in the manner that it deserves on this historic occasion.

Such a comprehension is assisted by the internal

setting of the world in which we live today. Lenin anticipated it:

"At the same time, precisely as a result of the last imperialist war, a number of countries — the East, India, China, et cetera — have been completely dislodged from their groove. Their development has completely shifted.... The general European ferment has begun to affect them, and it is now clear to the whole world that they have been drawn into a process of development that cannot but lead to a crisis in the whole of world capitalism." (Selected Works, Volume 9, Page 398)

These lines of 1923 tell us, at least in general, more about the world in which we now live than do most of the pages of tomorrow morning's newspaper. Not the gift of prophecy, but the social weight of the Russian peasantry plus the underdeveloped character of the Russian economy, enabled Lenin to see what was emerging. The Russian experience poses the problem of reconstructing all of contemporary society along the most modern, sensible lines: the intertwining of the movements of the peasantry with those of the proletariat and all other revolutionary forces. No underdeveloped country has as yet been able to escape what was once called the "Russian Question". The critical components of 1922-23 are today the preoccupations of leaders and led, the organized and unorganized, small organizations and large parties, academic scholars and the most ordinary men and women of the street and work place.

THE THIRD WORLD: THE PEASANTRY

The reader will note that we are constantly talking about struggles, conflicts, the attempts of classes to dominate one another or break through to something new. This is supposed to be a special viciousness introduced into history by Marx and Lenin, ending in the inevitable bloodthirstiness and savagery of Stal-

inism. This is not only untrue, it is stupid.

Marx insisted from the beginning that he had not invented the class struggle, that he had not conjured it up as an idea or as a mere interpretation of historical actuality. Various others had done that before him and even more so afterward. Among the most specific additions that Marx made to social thought was while there had always been class conflicts, with the arrival of the workers at the industrial base of society, a class had come upon the scene which as the culmination of its struggle would abolish all classes and any notion of society as being in any way built upon class differentiation.

Deep in the evolution of European philosophy there was this concept of a life-and-death struggle for every single human being, in which each is engaged from the very beginning of his consciousness of the world. In the main it has been the prime purpose of political leaders, and of their philosophers, to deny any such general truth, even to indict it as criminal, while at the same time employing such a notion of life-and-death human struggle when it serves their specific purposes, as for example in a war. Before entering into the questions involving the world's peasant peoples, we must examine two quotations on this subject, one from a classic of philosophy, and the other, equally well-acknowledged, from sociology, the science of society. First Hegel.

In the extracts that follow, extracts that will be discussed as we go on, Hegel is dealing with the phenomenology of mind and he is saying what are the mental processes of people in society. He deals with the mental processes of the master and the slave, of the man in charge of an economic development and the man who is working for him.

"The presentation of itself, however, as pure abstraction of self-consciousness consists in showing itself as a pure negation of its objective form, or in showing that it is fettered to no determinate exist-

ence, that it is not bound at all by the particularity everywhere characteristic of existence as such, and is not tied up with life. The process of bringing all this out involves a twofold action — action on the part of the other (the person over there) and action on the part of itself. In so far as it is the other's action, each aims at the destruction and death of the other."

This is what has been taking place in Detroit and elsewhere in the United States, and throughout the world. It says: in so far as it is the other's action — other — two separate people — the relation between them, each aims at the destruction and death of the other.

"But in this there is implicated also the second kind of action, self-activity; for the former implies that it risks its own life."

The question is that in a class relation life is risked, and Hegel says a fundamental part of a relation of one section, one man to the other, and Marx and others have applied it to classes, is the fact that they are ready at a certain stage, the relation demands a fight to the death. Your life has to be risked.

"The relation of both self-consciousnesses is in this way so constituted that they prove themselves and each other through a life-and-death struggle."

In other words, the different sections of society cannot work out any system and cannot find out what they are to each other and what they are to themselves unless they reach a stage where they are fighting to the end and life and death are involved.

"They must enter into this struggle, for they must bring their certainty of themselves (you have to find out what you are), the certainty of being for themselves, to the level of objective truth, and make this a fact both in the case of the other and in their own case as well."

They have to fight to know what they are. They have to fight to know what they are going for. They have to fight to the death to know what the other fellow wants. And it is only under these conditions that some understanding of full self-consciousness is reached.

"And it is solely by risking life that freedom is obtained."

Otherwise you don't know. There are places where he says, you live a sort of superficial life and then:

"Only thus is it tried and proved that the essential nature of self-consciousness is not bare existence, is not the merely immediate form in which it at first makes its appearance, is not its mere absorption in the expanse of life. Rather it is thereby guaranteed that there is nothing present but what might be taken as a vanishing moment — that self-consciousness is merely pure self-existence, being-for-self. The individual, who has not staked his life, may, no doubt, be recognized as a Person; but he has not attained the truth of his recognition as an independent self-consciousness. In the same way each must aim at the death of the other, as it risks its own life thereby; for that other is to it of more worth than itself; the other's reality is presented to the former as an external other, as outside itself; it must cancel that externality. The other is a purely existent consciousness and entangled in manifold ways; it must view its otherness as pure existence for itself or as absolute negation." (Hegel: Phenomenology of Mind, Page 233)

We have been dealing with the relation between master and slave. Now he goes on to the bondsman. The master has one form of existence, the slave has another. And now Hegel says:

"But again, shaping or forming the object has not only the positive significance that the bondsman becomes thereby aware of himself as factually and objectively self-existent...." (Page 238)

It is in shaping the object for the master that the bondsman becomes aware of himself as factually and objectively self-existent.

"...this type of consciousness has also a negative

import, in contrast with its first moment, the element of fear. For in shaping the thing it only becomes aware of its own proper negativity...." (Page 239)

In working at the business it realizes its own insignificance, its own weakness:

"...its existence on its own account, as an object, through the fact that it cancels the actual form confronting it. But this objective negative element is precisely the alien, external reality, before which it trembled. Now, however, it destroys this extraneous alien negative, affirms and sets itself up as a negative in the element of permanence, and thereby becomes for itself a self-existent being." (Page 239)

By changing this thing in front of it and working for the master and being the person who handles it, it thereby becomes a self-existent being.

"In the master, the bondsman feels self-existence to be something external, an objective fact; in fear self-existence is present within himself; (but) in fashioning the thing, self-existence comes to be felt explicitly as his own proper being, and he attains the consciousness that he himself exists in its own right and on its own account." (Page 239)

The man is the slave to the master, and the self-existence of the consciousness of the slave is in reality the master. However they have reached the stage by fighting it out to the death, each understands the other and something begins. Now, however, he has to handle the goods which his master is going to enjoy and he is afraid of the master because he has to handle this thing and do it well. He realizes in his self-consciousness that the master is in reality the master of everything. But in shaping the thing and taking part in making it into something else, he then realizes his own self-consciousness as an independent being.

If we penetrate this bit of Hegel, we can come to understand the bitter but inevitable nature of the

struggles that go on in the world, and have gone on. From this we can comprehend the nature of the struggle of classes which Marx took from a commonplace observation to a profound and world-significant universal philosophical comprehension.

The life and death struggle that Hegel talks of appears in the bitter character of peasant wars from those in Germany in the Sixteenth Century to the guerrilla struggles in Latin America and Vietnam today. It characterizes as well the struggle of those who are some mere decades away from peasant existence, such as the Negro people of the United States.

What Hegel expostulated as philosophy for the individual thinker Marx proceeded to advance as the movement of social bodies. Marx wrote:

"What I did that was new was to prove (1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular, historic phases in the development of production; (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society." (Marx-Engels: Selected Correspondence, Page 57. Italics in the original.)

Those lines were written in 1852; they were pushed to a conclusion in Twentieth Century terms by Lenin:

"...a new source of great world storms opened up in Asia. The Russian Revolution was followed by the Turkish, the Persian, and the Chinese revolutions. It is in this era of storms and their 'repercussions' on Europe that we are now living. Whatever may be the fate of the great Chinese Republic, against which the various 'civilized' hyenas are now baring their teeth, no power on earth can restore the old serfdom in Asia or wipe out the heroic democracy of the masses of the people in the Asiatic and semi-Asiatic countries." (Selected Works, Volume 11, Page 51)

For Lenin this all confirmed the class nature of

political struggle and thinking about the political future, about the "Historical Destiny of Marx's Doctrine", the title Lenin uses for the previous quotation and the next:

"The Asiatic revolutions have revealed the same spinelessness and baseness of liberalism, the same exceptional importance of the independence of the democratic masses, and the same sharp line of division between the proletariat and bourgeoisie of all kinds. After the experience of both Europe and Asia, whoever now speaks of non-class politics and non-class Socialism simply deserves to be put in a cage and exhibited alongside the Australian kangaroo." (Selected Works, Volume 11, Pages 51-52)

What once pertained to Europe is now of Asia and of much more. The life-and-death struggle described in a classic philosophical work is in reality class politics, the class politics that encompasses the world. At a time when society as a civilized entity is endangered by social stratification which calls itself democratic or liberal or socialist, we are compelled to reconsider those moments of participation of the peasant masses which help account for whatever civilization we still have.

The name of Solon is still to be found in the newspapers and the school texts as a personification of political wisdom. What he did was to set Greece on the road to what is legitimately claimed to be the most remarkable achievement of civilization. He involved the peasantry in the revolution which broke the power of the landed aristocrats. Trade and industry of the elemental kind was substituted, but the peasantry took the great role open to it by bringing about the new regime and what we now know of as "the glory that was Greece", especially that startling concentration of civilized accomplishment that was Athens.

In Rome there took place the great revolution led

by the Gracci. It failed, but peasants right through the peninsula of Italy insisted that citizenship could no longer belong only to the inhabitants of the city of Rome, but should be the possession of the peninsula as a whole. Under the Roman Empire, many historians believe, it was this notion of a universal citizenship which was extended to all the free inhabitants of the Empire that was crucial in maintaining that remarkable political achievement. Indeed, the very concept, citizenship, in Rome came to be associated with the very reality of civilization itself. It is important to remember this today.

What followed in the late Middle Ages was continuity along a similar line. The reason for the failure of such highly advanced centers of civilization as the city-states of Florence and north Italy was that they were unable to incorporate the peasantry of the surrounding areas. It proved impossible to maintain the polarization of urbanized artistic, economic, and social sophistication at one end with rural idiocy, superstition, and isolation at the opposite extreme. The city-state had to give way to capitalistic society, a monarch heading the whole nation, supported to a substantial degree by the feudal landowners. The failure of the prologue to modern society, the attempt of the city-states of Italy (and indeed those of the Low Countries) at popular democracy was based on the failure to involve the peasant masses.

The first great modern revolution was the one that owes more to the peasantry than to any other section of society. The yeoman farmers of England in the English Revolution of the Seventeenth Century were the basis of the finest army that Europe up to that date had known; it first and foremost ensured the success of that revolution. Secondly, the army in discussions with its leader, Oliver Cromwell, produced as a political formation the Levellers, the leaders and spokesmen who formulated the "Agreement of the People" in its various forms. These laid down the

relevant principles of democracy, the popular, democratic content of which has not yet been fulfilled in any modern country. Thus, the yeomanry was not only the fundamental mass leverage of the overturn of the ancient monarchy and its accompanying feudalism; it also put forward clear and distinct political ideas which must be the basis of any socialist society.

From the vantage point of the extensive Russian peasantry, Lenin repeatedly explained that you cannot have socialism without carrying democracy to its extreme, a concept impossible to understand in a historically concrete way unless one begins with the party of the Levellers.

Everyone knows that it was the peasant revolution which helped to break the power of the French aristocrats. But there is something else which the majority of people do not know. All over France, village communes consisting of peasants and agricultural workers organized together and formed the various federations which became the different districts of which France is composed today. While Paris spearheaded the revolution, the new France was built on the Federation established by the actions of the populace in the countryside.

We believe that this achievement of the peasantry in establishing what we know as modern France needs to be solidly established today when the peasants of the world have once again laid claim to the making of history and the advancement of civilization, this time not on a city, or national, but on a world-wide scale. It is not accidental that this tremendous historical event is registered in a piece of writing by Michelet, the famous historian of the French Revolution.

Michelet writes: "This opposition becomes completely insignificant in the midst of the immense popular movement which was asserting itself everywhere. Never since the Crusades was there such a shaking up of the masses, so general, so deep. In '90

the impetus of fraternity, now the impetus of war.

"Where did this impetus begin? Everywhere. No precise origins can be fixed for these great spontaneous acts. In the summer of 1789 during the terrorism of the brigands, the scattered population, even those of the hamlets are afraid of their isolation: hamlets are united with hamlets, villages with villages, even the city with the country. Confederation, mutual help, brotherly friendship, fraternity, this is the idea, the title of these pacts. Few, very few, are as yet written down. At first the idea of fraternity is limited. It involved only neighbors, and at most the province. The great federation of Brittany and Anjou still has this provincial character. Convened on November 26th, it achieved its purpose in January. At the center of the peninsula, far from the main highways in the lonely little town of Pontivy, the representatives of 150,000 national guards are meeting. Only the horsemen wear a common uniform, red jackets with black lapels; all the others distinguishable by their pink, purple and suede lapels, et cetera, recalled at this same gathering the diversity of the cities which sent them. In their coalition, to which they invited all the municipalities of the kingdom, they nevertheless insisted upon forming a permanent family of Brittany and Anjou, 'whatever new departmental division may be necessary for the administration'. They established a system of correspondence between their cities. In the general disorder, in the uncertainty in which they find themselves due to the success of their new order, they arrange at least to be organized separately.

"In the less isolated countries, at the crossing of large routes, especially on the rivers, the pact of fraternity takes on a wider scope. Under the old regime with the multitude of toll charges, and internal customs, the rivers were merely limits, obstacles, fetters; but under the rule of liberty they became the main routes of circulation, they put men in

contact with ideas, with feelings, as well as with commerce.

"It is near the Rhone, two leagues from Valence, in the small market town of Etoile, that, for the first time, the province is renounced; fourteen rural communes of Dauphine unite and embrace the great French unity (November 29th, 1789). A very effective reply from these peasants to the politicians and to the Mouniers who appealed to provincial pride, to the spirit of partition, who were trying to arm the province of Dauphine against France.

"This Federation, renewed at Montelimart, is no longer only Dauphinoise, but is mixed with several provinces from both banks. Dauphine and Vivarais, Provence and Languedoc. This time, therefore, they are French. Grenoble sends people there of its own accord, in spite of the municipality, in spite of its politics; she no longer cares about her role as capital, she prefers to be part of France. All together they repeat the sacred oath which the peasants have already sworn in November: 'No more provinces! the Nation!' And to help each other, to feed one another, to pass the corn from hand to hand along the Rhone (December 13th)."

The work of rural people in transforming society and eradicating ancient ills was continued in the American Civil War. White farmers and black former slaves intervened to bring American civilization to a new height. In the first half of that conflict the farmers of the American northwest opposed the extension of slavery into the free states and territories. These farmers played a crucial role in the creation of a new political party, the Republican Party, dedicated to free states and territories.

In the final decisive years of that war, the slaves themselves flocked to the Northern Army to guarantee the unity of the country and to safeguard and deepen their own emancipation. The stage was being set for something in the next century.

Not only do the present generation of Afro-Americans, themselves a few generations away from Southern soil, rural people undergoing the new impact of urban life and industrial capitalism, battle for equality in every sphere of life. They demand in reality the outline of an entirely new America. Rural people in their transition to urban life have nurtured the pre-condition of a new ordering of the constitutive elements that make America.

In the Twentieth Century the Russian peasants took the stage. It required the Russian peasantry of two revolutions, 1905 and 1917, plus the counter-revolution of the 1920s, to enable us to see clearly an experience that is now thoroughly international. Stalin was forced in his drive for mastery not only to destroy the Bolshevik Party, to stifle free intellectual and artistic development and behead, shackle, and fetter the working class. He had to subjugate the peasantry to ensure his domination of all that had been the product of the Russian Revolution, a domination which enabled him to defeat that revolution in a way that all the reactionary armies had not been able to do. Stalin, with his eyes set on the necessity of economic development of backward Russian society as a whole, unloosed a war upon those he called "Kulaks" — an insulting word referring to the middle layer and the well-to-do among the agricultural population. He sent millions of peasants, torn away from their lands by military power, to Siberia.

At the very same time, in the turn from the port cities of Shanghai and Canton to the peasantry in the interior that took place in 1927-28, the Chinese Communist Party made its own turn — but in an opposite direction. At first it went into the interior of the country for tactical reasons, to escape the persecutions opened upon it in the cities. Mao Tse-tung was theoretically unprepared for the intricacies of the agrarian question. But the objective situation was such, and the readiness of the peasants for self-

arming so ingrained in the Chinese countryside, that while paying lip service to Stalin, the Chinese Communists began to root their own party situation in the struggles against landlordism.

The fruit of all this was Chinese national independence and the troubles this has given the bourgeois powers of the West and the traditional Communist movement ever since. Without the Peasant Associations of China, which did not wait for their formation upon any Communist Party, all this could not have come about. The peasantry was announcing its entry into world politics. What may have happened to the Chinese Revolution after the consolidation of national independence is another question. But the achievement of national independence by a peasant army stands as an unquestionable fact by all willing to see.

The Indian national struggles after World War I followed something of the path whereby the Russian intelligentsia went to the peasant mass a century before. The Indian leader, Gandhi, made his name and fame by emulating the life of the peasant and engaging in all kinds of activities which would capture the peasants' imagination. Even those who called themselves Socialist in India, would, by the late 1930s, attempt to carry the whole peasantry with them in the effort to expel the British. Gandhi found a unifying tactic in the refusal to pay taxes, the peasants drove the struggle forward to include assaults on the landlords and moneylenders.

It was the intervention of war which moved the mass of the sharecroppers into the new struggle. The Japanese had invaded East Bengal, peasant committees began to administer affairs in the village and order justice there. Undoubtedly among the vital reasons that the British imperial authorities were prepared to leave the sub-continent that is India and Pakistan was the determination of the peasants to engage in uncompromisable struggles which no amount of diplomatic conferences with Indian Congress

Party leaders could in any way obviate. An organic social rupture was taking place in the length and breadth of Asia with the masses of peasants as its center and political independence as its viable result.

Perhaps there is no more singular illustration of the power of the peasantry than the world impact of Vietnamese peasants. The Vietnam peasants have in effect now mobilized whole sections of the American population and immobilized whole sectors of the American State. The Vietnamese as a people live in an industrially primitive civilization revolving around the cultivation of rice and the isolation of a village-based social structure. Yet they are facing the tremendous power of the United States with an energy, an endurance, and a heroism which cannot be exceeded. Napoleon, the greatest man of military affairs of the last centuries, faced it in Spain, he faced it in peasant Russia, he faced it in San Domingo. And today the Vietnam farmer shows us what the peasantry contains in itself.

Africa is in many ways key to the understanding of the role of the peasants in a world order in transition. The first new, independent state to be established on that continent was Ghana. The rise of Nkrumah in Ghana was ultimately determined by the peasant population in both political and social terms. While Nkrumah built a certain base for his political party in the major city of Accra, it was his tireless campaigning in the most outlying parts of the country among the rural people which produced the situation where the once all-powerful Colonial Office had to bring him out of jail to govern. No one else could govern the country. The population, ready, as Nkrumah has written, for anything, had seen to that.

The closeness of the city people to the peasantry in Ghana created the objective environment for the unification of the mass of the population, in both city and country. The market women who have for centuries united town and country through well-established

domestic marketing arrangements, the internal migration of people, and the sophistication of the coastal population, provided the bridge to the more distant rural population.

Nkrumah was able to respond to this readiness of the population, this closeness between town and country, and to express the aspirations of the total population. But more than this. He was the most vocal spokesman for African unity, for the notion of a Pan-African movement — the continental unity of peasant peoples.

We have now surveyed the role of the peasantry throughout the world, and have dealt with the reactionary prejudice that it will take hundreds of years before supposedly backward masses are brought up to the level of supposedly advanced peoples. Historical example after example show that the popular mass need only see the possibilities of a new society and the possibilities of assistance, not domination, of the advanced technical knowledge of the world: within fifteen or twenty years we can have a totally different world society.

Political independence is only, however, the first step in a long and difficult process. Now must come the working out of the difficult internal problems, the work relations, the connections between town and country, the utilization of popular resourcefulness. The mess left by the colonial powers, still not by any means totally out of the picture, must be cleared up.

The work and slim writings of a leader of the movement for independence in Tanganyika, D. K. Chisiza, offer the most concrete and penetrating analysis of the problem before Africa — and indeed the rest of the former colonial territories — that we know. Chisiza, unfortunately killed in an automobile accident when barely thirty, provides that kind of understanding that the architects of the new Africa must have.

The great strength of Chisiza's analysis lies in the fact that it begins and ends in the spirit of concern with the ninety per cent of the population which is rural and tribal. It is through this emphasis that he avoids the abstract treatment typical of old-fashioned autocracies and modern bureaucracies. While aware of the general problem of Africa in the midst of the cold war and the dangers of atomic annihilation, neo-colonialist economic control, and intervention by way of political intrigue and mercenary armies, Chisiza keeps his sights aimed at the transformation of the African tribalist into an industrial citizen. The uniqueness of his analysis and its general unavailability not only in Europe and America but in Africa as well, fully justifies an extensive quotation from his work in this document. The following is taken from his Realities of African Independence, published in 1961.

"Men flock in from rural areas to take up jobs in industrial enterprises. They are taught certain skills. But no sooner is the training over than they decide to return 'home'. Thus money, time and valuable effort will have been wasted on training men who will keep no track with industry. Worse still, when these men return to the industrial centers for another bout of employment, there is no arrangement to get them back to the jobs for which they were trained. The result is that they take up new jobs for which they have to receive new training. But before long the process is repeated all over again, the men turn their backs on industry and head for 'home'. Governments which have schemes for training foremen, charge hands, mechanics, artisans, and other skilled or semi-skilled workers face precisely the same, and no less a problem. This will probably prove to be one of the most intractable problems confronting African governments.

"The question must be asked: Why is it that Africans from rural areas find it difficult to sink roots in

industrial centers? Why won't they settle down to regular industrial employment? There are six answers to this question:

"(a) Because they feel lonely in urban areas. An African who has been brought up in an extended family system, under which family ties are very strong, cannot bear to be away from his family and relations for long. He is subjected to a loneliness which comes close to being a torture. Those who are brought up in a horizontal family system may not fully appreciate its intensity. But it is there — real, intense, merciless.

"(b) Because towns subject them to a sense of insecurity. Tribal life revolves around the institution of 'mutual aid and co-operation' from which people derive a tremendous sense of security. Like land, it is the equivalent of banks, savings, insurance policies, old age pensions, national assistance schemes, and social security. This 'mutual aid and co-operation' is non-existent in towns because urban communities are made up of people drawn not from one but from numerous tribes — conglomerations in which the institution cannot survive even if it were introduced.

"(c) Because they have obligations to their people 'back home' which can be fulfilled only in person. The people who come to work in industrial centers are at once children of their parents, fathers, husbands, brothers, and uncles. According to African custom, they must therefore look after and take over the responsibilities of their aging parents; they must periodically build houses for themselves and 'the old people'; they must initiate their male children in the customs and traditions of their tribes; and they must discharge their duties as husbands — all of which cannot be done from afar.

"(d) Because they find it trying to adjust themselves to the mode of life of urban areas. Town life bears little resemblance to the life they lead in rural

areas. In fact it is a wonder that they are able to put up with the complexities and vicissitudes of urban life for as long as they do. The gap between the two ways of life is so wide that one can cross it permanently only at the risk of protracted psychological discomfiture. It is a far cry from the world of the hoe, deer hunting, war dances, canoe regattas, and moral rectitude to that of the conveyor belt, tennis, tango, and promiscuity.

"(e) Because a good many of them feel that one cannot bring up children properly in towns. Juvenile delinquency, hooliganism, prostitution, marriage instability, greed, and individualism which characterize life in urban areas are revolting to rural peoples. That is why those of them who are forced by circumstances to ask their wives to join them in towns, send their children 'back home' to be brought up in the traditional way.

"(f) Because their goals are realized quickly. Men who come to towns have definite goals in mind. It may be the purchase of a sewing machine, a plough, a bicycle, clothes, or kitchen utensils. They may be trying to raise money to enable them to build brick houses or to settle cases or to pay taxes. As soon as the goals are achieved it is deemed time to put odds and ends together and head for home.

"All these reasons combine to compel the rural African to return to the rural areas 'where men are men and women are proud of them'." (Chisiza, Realities of African Independence, Page 21)

What makes these detailed analyses exemplary in their perceptiveness is that they correspond to the problems of peoples trying to make their way everywhere. From the original entry of the Russian peasantry onto the forefront of political experience to the emergence of modern Africa, the overriding central issue has been the division between town and countryside, between ever-centralizing bureaucrats and the resourcefulness of local initiative.

Here is this problem in the Russian Revolution at the eve of the long dark night of its deterioration and degeneration. Lenin is speaking.

"Under certain conditions the exemplary organization of local work, even on a small scale, is of far greater national importance than many branches of central state work. And these are precisely the conditions we are in at the present moment in regard to peasant farming in general, and in regard to the exchange of surplus products of agriculture for the manufacture of industry in particular. Exemplary organization in this respect, even in a single vlost, is of far greater national importance than the 'exemplary' improvement of the central apparatus of any People's Commissariat; for our central apparatus has been built up during the past three and a half years to such an extent, we cannot improve it quickly to any extent, we do not know how to do it. Assistance in the more radical improvement of it, a new flow of fresh forces, assistance in the successful struggle against bureaucracy, in the struggle to overcome this harmful inertness, must come from the localities, from the lower ranks, with the exemplary organization of a small 'whole', precisely a 'whole', that is, not one farm, not one branch of the economy, not one enterprise, but the sum total of economic relations, the sum total of economic exchange, even if only in a small locality.

"Those of us who are doomed to remain on work at the center will continue the task of improving the apparatus and purging it of bureaucracy, even if in modest and immediately achievable dimensions. But the greatest assistance in this task is coming, and will come, from the localities." (Selected Works, Volume 9, Page 191. Emphasis in the original.)

That phrase, "Those of us who are doomed to remain on work at the center", is the ultimate wisdom, the need, the overwhelming desire of the greatest student of human affairs that any government has

every known. His mastery of philosophy, political economy, and politics could find its climax and fruition only in going to work among the peasants in a Russian village.

THE UNITED STATES AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

What has happened in relations between Russia and the United States over the last dozen years is of primary significance for us. American power has accommodated itself to Russian power because the threat of working-class revolution against Stalinist power is more frightening than the competition with modern Russia. While the conflict has not ceased, it has been carefully controlled. This new stage in the relationship was marked by the October of 1956, the Hungarian Revolution. This was a revolution of the entire Hungarian population, led by the working class, against Russian occupation and the Communist Party dictatorship. In the past in the cold war between America and Russia, the American government responded quickly and forcefully to what it considered the challenge of "international communism". But it met the rising of the Hungarian working class in the face of tremendous military odds with the insistence that the repression of Hungary was an internal matter of the "Warsaw Pact" signatories. America acquiesced in the slaughter of the Hungarian proletarian revolution, a revolution that marked the furthest stage of the revolutionary development of the modern working class. In it the working class demonstrated that it could dispense with political parties and rely solely on the power of its direct organization in workers' councils at the point of production. This workers' power was too great a threat to American capitalism; American capitalism did not mind that Russian tanks defeated it.

Today the American and Russian working classes

stand as the heirs of the Hungarian workers of 1956. Therefore, only an analysis of the interpenetration of Russian and American working classes can allow us to see the way out of the tensions that portend the making of World War III.

In 1917 the largest and most modern factory in the world was the Putilov works in Saint Petersburg. The social organization to correspond to that, however, was not in Russia at all. It was at the plant of the Ford Motor Company in Highland Park, Michigan. The Russian workers overthrew czarism, and then the capitalist government of Kerensky, in order to take possession of the Putilov works and all the rest of Russian industry. But the social order which they were revolting against, and which they were to face again in another form, had reached its highest development at Ford.

Ford had introduced the assembly line to raise labor productivity to new heights. But the assembly line raised more than productivity. It raised the alienation and fragmentation of workers to new heights. And so Ford introduced a new social organization to correspond to the technical organization of the assembly line. This was the Ford Service Department, which organized a totalitarian control over the lives of Ford workers, at work and at home, which was to become notorious for its viciousness, for its corruption, and for its pervasiveness. Combined with the ultimate in alienation and control was — the Five Dollar Day. This was evidence right at the start of a new stage of capitalist production that the intensification of exploitation was no longer to be synonymous with low wages.

What the Ford system was, was the embryonic form, limited to one company and one community, of fascism or totalitarianism. When the Ford system of production became the universal one in all industrial nations, the attempt to impose the Ford social system also became universal. It was successful in Italy. It

was successful in Germany. And it was the system which Stalin turned to in order to destroy the conquests of 1917 and to industrialize Russia at the expense of the Russian workers. Harry Bennett's Service Department on the grand scale — the GPU, organizer of purges, organizer of assassinations, organizer of slave labor camps.

In one sense, the fact that the peak of capitalist social organization had been reached in the United States and not in Russia was a sign of the weakness of the Russian working class. Although the Putilov works was the largest in the world and contained under its roof the largest concentration of workers ever assembled until that time, Russian industry as a whole was small and weak. And the Russian working class was small and weak. Not, of course, in relation to czarism, but in relation to the needs of a modern industrial civilization.

The American working class, despite the greater intensity of its exploitation in 1917 and in the years that followed, proved powerful enough to prevent the imposition of the Ford social system, that is, fascism, on the nation as a whole. The attempts to impose totalitarian order and regimentation on the nation, especially after the explosions of the depression days, were continuous. Fascist organizations were formed and reached considerable strength in some instances. And the interest in promoting an imposed social peace on the nation through totalitarian instruments reached into the New Deal cabinet of Franklin Roosevelt. But the outbursts, the strikes, the sitdowns, the political organization proved stronger than the counter-revolution and what emerged was Welfare State Capitalism instead of Totalitarian State Capitalism.

Now, after 50 years, we have come full circle and Russian and American workers once again share a fundamentally similar situation. In the Soviet Union it took the organization of labor itself, the Communist

Party, to impose the brutal discipline required by the needs of capital. The organization of labor transformed into its opposite, the instrument of capitalist discipline in production. In the United States too, although in more moderate form, the old social order proved inadequate to control and regiment the working class and one of the consequences of Welfare State Capitalism is that that task is more and more assumed by the organizations of labor, the unions. (In England the process is even more visible in the Labour Party.) Here, too, the organization of labor is transformed into its opposite, the instrument of capitalist discipline in production. And old Henry Fold knew what he was doing; his pattern is imitated to this day. He knew that he had to combine the carrot with the stick, the Five Dollar Day with the Service Department. So the union contracts of today combine the high wages and fringe benefits with the increase of discipline and intensification of the speed-up.

In 1917 it was still possible for different parts of the world to travel different roads. Today that is no longer true. What Russian workers will find it necessary to do, or what American workers will find it necessary to do, will also be done by their fellow workers on the other side of the world.

The Russian working class traveled a rocky and tortuous road from 1917 to 1967. In 1917 the Russian workers were unable to end the contradiction between economics and politics. They mastered politics and formed Soviets. But they did not succeed in mastering economics. They proved too small, too backward, too isolated to manage production. As a result they were driven back. The battles of the Civil War took a tremendous toll. Thousands of the workers who had made the Revolution fell in battle. The physical plant of Russian industry deteriorated with the result that the working class itself was scattered with an additional loss of productive skills. Skilled workers unable to work at their trade because of lack of equipment or

of materials drifted into black market trade or back to the farm or accepted unskilled work. The final blow was the Stalinist counter-revolution which annihilated the rank and file militants, the factory leaders, the worker-Bolsheviks.

In 1917 the Russian workers put an end to Russian feudalism. A decade later (1928) Stalin introduced the first Five Year Plan to impose a capitalist discipline on the workers. But it was an almost new working class, driven from the farms through the forced collectivization of agriculture which was intended both to supply the workers and to feed them. In 1928 the aim was the largest possible mass of labor through the subordination of the workers to the specialists in general. By 1931 industrialization had reached the point where exploitation could be intensified by increasing the pay of individuals through the institution of the piecework system. By 1935 this is developed into fully blown Stakhanovism, the piece worker as individual hero, the competition between workers. In this brutal way was industrialization introduced to state capitalist Russia and illiterate peasants transformed into disciplined workers. In 1936 the new Stalinist Constitution codified the new system and established the "intelligentsia"; that is, the experts, the party leaders, the managers as the new capitalist class.

The power of the small Russian working class of 1917, its overthrow of czarism and its control of the state, called forth the absolute extreme of totalitarian terror to overthrow it and then to dominate and discipline the new Russian working class. By the time of World War II, Russian industrialization had reached the point where the machinery itself could begin to discipline and organize the workers. Piecework becomes more systematized in the form of competition between factories.

The major turning point is 1943. This is the year of the conversion to the conveyor belt system. It cor-

responds to the theoretical admission, in Leontier's "Political Economy in the Soviet Union", that the law of value operates in the Soviet Union. But the conveyor-belt system indicates more than a technical level of sophistication. It indicates that a modern industrial proletariat has been formed, far in advance of the Russian workers of 1917. And the class struggle begins to develop as the workers attempt to organize their resistance to the intense exploitation. It begins in Vorkuta and the slave labor camps before the death of Stalin, and then spreads to all of Russia. Stalin's death and the relaxation of the oppression conceals the fact that the change in rulers did not cause the thaw but merely corresponded to the pressures of the workers.

At the Twentieth Congress of the Russian Communist Party in 1956, in a speech to which no one paid any attention because it was public (unlike the secret speech denouncing Stalin), Khrushchev points out that "there is a great deal of disorder and confusion in the system of wages and rate-fixing.... Cases of wage leveling are not uncommon. On the other hand, payment for the same type of work sometimes differs between various bodies, and even within a single body. Alongside the low-paid workers there exists a category of workers, a small one it is true, in whose wages unjustified excesses are tolerated."

What this means, of course, is that the Russian workers have succeeded in establishing the informal shop-floor organizations of struggle, known in all industrial countries. They have been able to make a mockery of the national plan and to force adjustments in wages (and, of necessity, working conditions) on a shop or department basis.

The stage that the modern industrial proletariat of a totalitarian state capitalist nation has reached was indicated negatively by Khrushchev. It was indicated positively by the Hungarian Revolution, where the opposition between economics and politics was finally

overcome. Hungary shows where the Russian working class has in fact reached, able to manage society both politically and economically.

In the United States the fantastic growth of the chemical industry and the development of the electric motor made possible the introduction of the continuous assembly line. Huge complexes such as the Ford plant were made possible by the new source of power which was portable within the plant and freed production from the need to be close to water power. They were aided, in the early stages of the chemical industry, by the finer grades of steel and other products made possible by the application of electricity and chemistry to machine production.

The result in the United States was a tremendous expansion of the working class, aided by World War I, and almost immediately the explosion of the class struggle. The period of the Twenties, the so-called prosperity years, begins with the great steel strike of 1919 and the Seattle General Strike, and ends in the Great Depression. It is a period, not of class peace, but of class war. But with the crushing of the steel strike the state and all the instruments of political power are clearly seen as the direct servant of capital. The workers, adept at using their economic power, find themselves unmercifully beaten back by the political (and military) power arrayed against them. In the United States, as in Russia, the workers are taking the needed time to learn about themselves, about the new forms of production, about the forms of organization adequate for their situation.

With the Great Depression this bursts forth in the formation of the CIO and the introduction of the sit-down strike. In the sit-down, the workers take their first long step toward control of production and, thereby, the elimination of the contradiction between economics and politics as it confronted the American working class. In their origin as spontaneous out-

bursts started without the approval and against the wishes of the leaders of the new unions, the sit-downs already foretell the fundamental split between workers and union leaders that is the hallmark of the labor movement today. And just as the workers' revolution of 1917 brought forth totalitarian state capitalism to suppress it, so the workers' revolt of the 1930s also brought forth the massive intervention of the state in the form of Welfare State Capitalism to suppress it. All of the labor and social reforms of the New Deal were designed to provide orderly bargaining through representatives supervised by the state and to put an end to workers' representing themselves in sit-downs and wildcats. The massive uprising of the 1930s had finally broken through the separation of economics and politics, but because it was not complete, because it ended in unions instead of control, the workers were able to transform American politics but not to control it.

The period of World War II is the period of the codification of the social legislation of the New Deal. The fusion between unions and government is made complete. The workers make one last attempt to break it in the immediate postwar years, and when the first round of postwar strikes has only limited success (winning the sliding scale of wages in the auto industry) both sides in the conflict move in new directions. American industry in the early Fifties embarks on a massive program of automation to free itself from the restrictions imposed on it by the workers (and made possible by the technological advances during the war in military products). The workers begin the necessary reorganization to correspond to the new form of production. In 1955 they indicate what that new form is. In the massive wildcats against a union settlement in auto, the workers put forward their own "specific local grievances" which, in their totality, show the desire of workers

to control production and demonstrate their total separation from the union. No longer will the union be the instrument to make significant social gains. Quite the contrary, through the union-company contract, the union becomes the instrument of capital, maintaining discipline in production, maintaining labor peace.

In the United States, by a different road and in modified form, the labor organization (the Union) becomes the organizer of production corresponding to Russian State Capitalism under which the labor organization (the Communist Party) becomes the organizer of production. The American working class too, although coming by a different road, has also reached the point where it is demonstrating its capacity to govern production and society in its own name. The Hungarian Revolution becomes the hallmark not only of the Russian working class, but of the workers of any industrialized country, above all, of the United States.

In 1917 the Russian workers demonstrated mastery over politics but failed in economics. The American workers were the most advanced economically but were beaten down politically. Fifty years later, both have achieved the maturity, the organization, the freedom from bureaucratic domination to make the final leap, the socialist revolution.

George Jackson

The previous analysis and the negation of the black struggles in Africa should show the method that is being used in this essay. It would be quite stupid, if not ridiculous, to attempt to give some sort of brief or concentrated account of black struggles in the United States. To do that properly would require a book or a series of lectures. Instead I shall continue, in fact intensify, the method that I have been raising so far. The most important name in the history of black struggles in the world at large or in the United States is Dr. W. E. B. DuBois. All thinking about black struggles today and some years past originates from him. Here, however, I have to take one single quotation from his work. In Black Reconstruction in America, 1860-1888, Dr. DuBois sums up his future of black struggles in the world at large. He concludes with a picture of the frustration suffered by blacks in the United States. He writes on Page 703:

> Such mental frustration cannot indefinitely continue. Some day it may burst in fire and blood. Who will be to blame ? And where the greater cost ? Black folk, after all, have little to lose, but Civilization has all. This the American black man knows: His fight here is a fight to the finish. Either he dies or he wins. If he wins it will be by no subterfuge or evasion of amalgamation. He will enter modern civilization here in America as a

> black man on terms of perfect and unlimited equality with any white man, or he will enter not at all. Either extermination root and branch, or absolute equality. There can be no compromise. This is the last great battle of the West.

That is where in 1971 we have to begin. In 1938 I visited the United States, and by 1948, speaking on the platform of the Socialist Workers Party (Trotskyism, which I left three years afterward), I introduced a resolution on the Negro question. In the course of it I said as follows:

> We can compare what we have to say that is new by comparing it to previous positions on the Negro question in the Socialist movement. The proletariat, as we know, must lead the struggles of all the oppressed and all those who are persecuted by capitalism. But this has been interpreted in the past and by some very good socialists too — in the following sense: The independent struggles of the Negro people have not got much more than an episodic value, and as a matter of fact, can constitute a great danger not only to the Negroes themselves, but to the organized labor movement. The real leadership of the Negro struggle must rest in the hands of organized labor and of the Marxist party. Without that the Negro struggle is not only weak, but is likely to cause difficulties for the Negroes and dangers to organized labor. This, as I say, has been the position held by many socialists in the past. Some great socialists in the United States have been associated with this attitude.

> We on the other hand say something entirely different. We say, number one, that the Negro struggle, the independent Negro struggle, has a vitality and a validity of its own: that it has deep historic roots in the past of America and in present struggles; it has an organic political perspective, along which it is traveling, to one degree or another, and everything shows that at the present time it is traveling with great speed and vigor. We say, number two, that this independent Negro movement is able to intervene with terrific force upon the general social and political life of the nation, despite the fact that it is waged under the banner of democratic rights, and is not led necessarily either by the organized labor movement or the Marxist party. We say, number three, and this is the most important, that it is able to exercise a powerful influence upon the revolutionary proletariat, that it has got a great contribution to make to the development of the proletariat in the United States, and that is in itself a constituent part of the struggle for socialism.

The reader will have to note that not only was the black question given an independent role with its own role and its own leadership, he must note also the great step forward that was made in Section 3. Previous to 1948 the whole Marxist movement, including myself, had always thought that on the whole and also in particular it was the proletariat, the Marxist party which had to educate all the elements of society on the fundamental reality of political struggle for socialism. A careful reading of that Section 3 will show that a sharp break was made with this traditional

policy. There it was made quite clear that the black struggles in the United States would be the education of the whole society in the realities of contemporary politics. That is precisely what is happening today and the best proof I can give of it are two quotations from the letters of a young man, George Jackson, published under the title Soledad Brother. Jackson was in prison at the age of 18 and was shot and killed in the prison at the age of 28. Of the ten years that he spent in prison, seven were spent in solitary confinement. The letters are in my opinion the most remarkable political documents that have appeared inside or outside the United States since the death of Lenin. Here is the first quotation:

> There is an element of cowardice, great ignorance, and perhaps even treachery in blacks of his general type. And I agree with Eldridge and Malcolm, we are not protecting unity when we refrain from attacking them. Actually it's the reverse that's true. We can never have unity as long as we have these idiots among us to confuse and frighten the people. It's not possible for anyone to still think that Western mechanized warfare is absolute, not after the experiences of the Third World since World War II. The French had tanks in Algeria, the US had them in Cuba. Everything, I mean every trick and gadget in the manual of Western arms has been thrown at the VC, and they have thrown them back, twisted and ruined; and they have written books and pamphlets telling us how we could do the same. It's obvious that fighting ultimately depends on men, not gadgets. So I must conclude that those who stand between us and the pigs, who protect the marketplace, are either cowards or traitors. Probably both....

The second quotation explains and historically places the first. Jackson claims that all the prisoners in his prison who are specially confined and specially punished think exactly as he does. He says that words like "honkey", a word that is commonplace for abuse of white people by black revolutionaries, these young men never used. Here is what Jackson says of them:

> ....All of these are beautiful brothers, ones who have stepped across the line into the position from which there can be no retreat. All are fully committed. They are the most desperate and dauntless of our kind. I love them. They are men and they do not fight with their mouths. They've brought them here from prisons all over the state to be warehoused or murdered, whichever is more expedient. That Brother Edwards who was murdered in that week in January told his lawyer that he would never get out of prison alive. He was at the time of that statement on Maximum Row, Death Row, Soledad, California. He was 21 years old. We have made it a point to never exchange words with these people. But they never relent. Angela, there are some people who will never learn new responses. They will carry what they incorporated into their characters at early youth to the grave. Some can never be educated. As a historian, you know how long and how fervently we've appealed to these people to take some of the murder out of their system, their economics, their propaganda; and as an intelligent observer you must see how our appeals were received. We've wasted many generations and oceans of blood trying to civilize these elements over here. It cannot be done in the manner in which we have attempted it in the past. Dialectics, understanding, love, passive resistance — they

won't work on an atavistic, maniacal, gory pig. It's going to grow much worse for the black male than it already is — much much worse. We are going to have to be the vanguard, catalyst, in any meaningful change.

It is quite obvious that where DuBois and myself were observing a situation, taking part, organizationally in our various ways, but guided by theoretical, that is to say intellectual development, the generation to which Jackson belonged has arrived at the profound conclusion that the only way of life possible to them is the complete intellectual, physical, moral commitment to the revolutionary struggle against capitalism. They are a stage beyond all historical and theoretical writing, and I add here an opinion that in my travels about the United States I have met or been aware of many thousands of young black people who could not express themselves in this manner, for Jackson is a born writer. But that is how they think, those are the principles on which they act, and as blacks they are not alone. It would take too much to show that their attitude is not confined to blackness, but that for the time being is enough. The reader of this must now go and for himself read all about Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Angela Davis, Huey Newton, the Black Panther Party, and the whole list of other names and persons who fill the political life of the United States today. But unless he has some clear grasp of the historical development which I have outlined he will not only be wasting his time but corrupting his understanding of what is taking place in the United States today.

C.L.R. James,III

The Way Out--

World Revolution

This is an analysis.

Three things are requisite for Marxists to understand:

The national state must be destroyed, and the only way in which that can be done is the break-up of all bourgeois institutions and their replacement by socialist institutions.

The French Revolution of 1968 showed that the mass of the population was ready to take over society and to form new institutions. The late De Gaulle recognized that, and that was the basis of his insistence on "participation". The decay of France's bourgeois institutions was proved not only by the tremendous outburst of the great body of the nation — an outburst comprehensive as no previous revolutionary outburst had been, but also by the fact that the bourgeoisie and the middle classes were quite powerless before the strength and the desire to break up the old state. They had very little to say, and, so far as could have been judged, were paralyzed by the decay and rottenness of the capitalistic regime and the power and range of the revolt against it.

The first concrete enemy is the bourgeois national state. It is absolutely impossible for a national state of any kind at this stage of the Twentieth Century to develop and even to maintain itself even the most revolutionary and proletarian of governments. Therefore Marxists must know and seek every possible

means of making it clear that the national quality of the state must be destroyed; that is to say, the revolution has got to be an international socialist revolution: to put it crudely: appeal to masses of the people in all countries to make their own, the fate of World Revolution. This appeal is not now being made by any section of revolutionary leadership, the world over. The national state cannot function today. And not to know that, not to make that clear means the destruction of the revolution.

The safety of any revolution, its completion, its ability to fight against the enormous pressures which will be placed upon it, the questions of food, finance, and possible military intervention of the counter-revolution of a certain kind, these are not questions removed from the day-to-day struggle. From the very beginning it has to be made clear that the economic relations, political relations, the safeguarding of any revolution against daily and political life now depends on the transformation of the bourgeois institutions into socialist institutions, the unleashing of the strength of the working class first of all. We do not make the revolution to achieve the socialist society. The socialist society makes the revolution. Today there is no period of transition from one regime to another. The establishment of the socialist regime, the power of the working class and those substantial elements in the nation who are ready to go with it, that is not something which one must look for to be achieved in the future. That is absolutely necessary now, not only for the socialist society but to maintain the ordinary necessities of life and to defend the elementary rights of all society.

What are the new socialist institutions ? Marxists do not know, nobody knows. The working class and the general mass of the population are creating them in action. Marxists are to be aware of that and to let the working class know that they alone can create the new institutions.

The highest revolutionary peak so far reached is the instinctive action of the working class in the Hungarian Revolution.

Vanguard Party, Social Democratic Party, Trade Union Leadership, all are bourgeois institutions. The revolution which was begun in France of 1968 and which we shall see continuing everywhere over the next period will save itself delay and temporary defeats if only from the very beginning it recognizes that all negotiations and arrangements about wages or anything else that the revolution has to undertake are to be undertaken by its own independent organizations. It may take some time before the 1968 French Revolution establishes this. But outside of France we can learn this. None of the regular institutions must be allowed to enter into negotiations on behalf of any section of the revolution. Over the next period new upheavals must understand this from the very beginning. Students will represent students and discuss with university staffs. Workers will represent workers, peasants will represent peasants, blacks will represent blacks, women will represent women. No kind of established organization which has been functioning in the bourgeois regime is to be accepted as a representative. This will be difficult to establish, particularly in regard to the trade union leadership especially where it represents a majority of the organized workers. But that for the revolution of 1968 was the key point at issue. No question of anarchism arises here. The very structure of modern society prepares the working-class and sections of society to undertake immediately the creation of socialist institutions.

We must point out the stages of the Marxist movement. Marx put forward the basic ideas in the Communist Manifesto after profound studies in philosophy, and revolutionary history, and the watching of a movement of the workers in some insignificant part of France. Then followed the Commune in 1871. It

was the Commune in 1871 which gave to Lenin and the Bolsheviks indications as to be able to understand what took place in 1905. 1905 was the dress rehearsal for 1917. We have to be able first for our own benefit to understand what has taken place between 1917 and 1968. We need not go preaching this to the working class, but Marxists have to be quite clear as to the stage of development so as to be able to recognize, welcome, and intensify the advances that are taking place instinctively in the nation and in the world at large. This work has to be done. The greatest mistake would be not to do it at all. Equally mischievous would be the idea that it can be done apart from the concrete struggles that are taking place everywhere. The World Revolution has entered in what could be a decisive and final stage.

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Marxism in the U.S.:

39 Propositions

By PAUL BUHLE

Introduction

The following propositions are offered as a discussion document, and as an abstract measurement of some of the distance Radical America has traveled in speaking to the most pressing theoretical problems of the Left. It is not, properly considered, a collective statement. Yet the efforts through RA to uncover the reality of American radicalism, the history of the working class, the direction of existent Marxism, and the unique features of modern culture have been inseparable from the individual searches of all the editors, and most especially from mine. Perhaps no other Marxist journal in the history of the American Left has been so undefined at its outset, and has so completely reflected in its growth and elaboration the development of its editors and writers.

No claim is made to precision or finality. These were first set down over the summer because the crumbling of the New Left has created a vacuum of theoretical discussion at a time when radical possibilities within the society are greater than at any time in a generation; and because in moving from Madison to Boston, RA is itself nearing its most important transition. In readapting ourselves to the new conditions, we have not simply repudiated or forgotten our past. Rather, we have begun to see that the

Movement as it was understood has been dialectically transcended and overcome; and that the next stage, whatever it brings, will mark a transformation of us all. The sense of totality that dances before our eyes has, with a few outstanding exceptions, not been even remotely reflected in the writings of our generation of revolutionaries. Toward the explication of that sense, this document is intended as a modest contribution.

> The evolution of society constantly heightens the tension between the partial aspects and the whole. Just because the inherent meaning of reality shines forth with an ever more resplendent light, the meaning of the process is embedded ever more deeply in day-to-day events, the totality permeates the spatio-temporal character of phenomena. (George Lukacs, History and Class-Consciousness)

1

A century since the first wide-scale attempts at working-class self-organization and the introduction of the Marxian critique in the United States, there is today no radical social movement of any importance. The most basic assumption upon which Socialism and Communism rested as movements — the centrality of a materially deprived white male industrial proletariat aided by other forces of essentially secondary importance — has been thoroughly discredited, but nowhere replaced with any new, comprehensive notion. Politically, we find on the one side the parties of the Left's past, living on ideological notions and exerting a certain deadening pressure upon social theory and practice, but finally irrelevant to the mass disaffection and motion opening up in front of

us; on the other, the fragments of a Movement which collapsed without becoming part of a new revolutionary force or even understanding in world forces the meaning of its own demise. Clearly enough, the basic sources of our situation have not been understood and confronted.

2

Nowhere has capitalism so fully and "Shamelessly" (Marx) developed as in the United States. Consequently, Marxist theory cannot ascribe the apparent weakness of the revolutionary forces to some exceptional circumstances, but must regard their problems as basic to the universal conditions of modern class society. The mutilated forms of radical theory and practice cannot be attributed to "revisions" and betrayals, but must be sought in the heart of Capitalist social and economic development. Least hampered by the constrictions of earlier societies, American Capitalism has naturally moved most rapidly toward the exhaustion of its absolute possibilities; in its self-destruction, we may trace the exhaustion of older forms of popular resistance and the rise of a new, total revolutionary movement.

3

Nowhere did Western exploitation of the Third World find so direct and mutually pervasive social relations as with American society's black legion of forced labor. Here a slice of "backward" humanity provided a single nation with the impetus for a vast industrial economy, and precipitated the first great war of modern times (known with ironic blandness as "the Civil War"), rising within the struggle as a central force in preserving the society. Nowhere did the destruction of pre-industrial forms of labor fall so clearly upon woman's social relationships and di-

vide her in a specifically modern sense from a definition of herself as a subject of history. Here, women gained exceptional power in colonial society only to have opportunities wrenched from their daughters as industrialization proceeded and the nuclear family solidified; here, vast numbers of women, eyes opened by the looseness of class relations, could see the proximity of real freedom while denied its substance. Nowhere finally did a society so create a sense of individual liberty and self-determination in the "ordinary" (white male) citizen, imbuing in so many millions the self-conscious privilege of governing their own fate; nowhere has this individualistic freedom been so used to justify social reaction in the Twentieth Century.

Weaknesses for the development of a traditional class movement, these circumstances in American society are in general preconditions for the emergence of human transformation which marks the next phase of class development and underlies the revolutionary possibilities of our time: In casting forth the Third World member, the woman, and the individual citizen as central to a social order, American society created them as universal categories even while denying the possibility of their unity in an old-style class movement. In the realization of these categories the road opens for the creation of the first truly modern working class and for the possibility of freedom for all.

4

Nowhere did the thirst for development inherent in Capitalism imbibe so many millions of immigrants of so many cultures: Here was the closest national approximation to the configuration of the world labor movement compressed into one struggle. Historically cultural and ethnic divisions interlinked with racial and sexual differences to obstruct systematic class

consciousness. The advanced forms of class exploitation pioneered by American Capitalism forced the gradual liquidation of cultural differences at the point of production — but not nearly so fast in the social-cultural milieu of home, neighborhood, and political citizenship; at the same time, an advanced working class was forced by the increasing pace of exploitation toward the most monumental day-by-day shop resistance. Nowhere, consequently, has a modern working class exhibited such an active record of industrial militancy (measured in sheer numbers of working hours lost and in violence in factory activity) and such indifference to political forms reflecting class self-consciousness.

5

Already at the outset of the present century, the dynamics of a modern, proletarian revolutionary movement became clear to those who could perceive the obsolescence of barricades in an age of mass industrial power. The development of mass production in a variety of industries brought together a workforce from the rural life of America and Europe, only instinctively aware of the meaning of its new existence at the center of modern society. Against the most brutalizing and deprived conditions, it revolted instinctively, as a mass, through strikes for rudimentary improvements. The Industrial Workers of the World and its allies recognized in this crude force — foreshadowed by the Pullman Strike of 1894 and expressed in full form last in the mass strikes of 1919 — the essence of Socialism: the development of working-class confidence and self-governmental ability on the shop floor, leading to workers' councils which would replace political government at the moment of revolution.

6

The American Socialist movement only partially reflected these possibilities. The Party grew up small and late by European standards, combining a Nineteenth Century tradition of reform eclectically into a self-styled "Marxist" class movement. Reflecting the transformation of American society, it espoused both the aspirations of the fading middle-class and skilled workers to uphold social and ethical standards against monopolism; and the desire for workers' power by a thin stratum of politicized workers. Unable to choose between past and present, it was transformed by World War I, which eroded its old bases and replaced them with the representatives of the unskilled workers. But as a Party it could go no further: repressed, divided, it cracked in 1919 and remained behind.

7

There were no Soviets in the United States, not because America lacked a Lenin but because Capitalism in the United States was becoming the strongest link in the chain of world Capitalist domination. While the War left European Capital prostrate, American Capital grew into a vast empire of commercial penetration. Its work force emerged with its principal sectors solidified against each other: skilled workers whose unions were temporarily strengthened by government patronage in wartime; unskilled workers (including the vast bulk of women and black voters) violently repressed in their organizing efforts; and the advanced guard of a new sector of white-collar employees, growing with industrial specialization and as a sector clinging to the coattails of the big bourgeoisie.

8

The mass upsurge of labor's foreign-speaking, unorganized sector was turned back: the pivotal steel strike in 1919 and the accompanying mass strikes throughout industry showed the impossibility of successful organization for the masses of workers along American Federation of Labor craft lines, as the failure of the IWW to maintain its victories earlier had shown the weakness of overt revolutionary unionism.

With the division and retreat of the working class, the first Moment of Marxism in the United States had passed. In its scope had been realized the first glimmerings of class self-confidence, and the first recognition by Marxists of the significance of those glimmerings. But theorists and activists who had seen in this mass action by unorganized workers a mirror to the Soviets were premature; and Marxism as a theory of working class self-activity faded into Communist (or decadent Socialist) political Ideology.

9

As radicalism faltered, the development of social relations within modern Capitalism revealed the incomplete nature of the class movement. In the generation after 1900, a social feminism grew within the ranks of middle- and upper-middle class women, congealed politically in and around the radical wings of the Suffragist and Socialist movements. Uncertain of its aims, unaware of its potential strength in the working class, the vague movement lost inertia after the achievement of suffrage and faded into a multitude of personal solutions to a social problem (the "new sexuality" of relaxed repression, the new individual opportunities for economic advancement, and the "liberation" of the middle-class home). Simul-

taneously, a vast movement of blacks proceeded to fill wartime occupations in the North, transforming the situation of millions of black workers and their families. The new possibilities of urban life were first shown in the ideologically confused but enormously powerful force: the response to the movement of Marcus Garvey, revealing in spite of its limitations the reservoir of black social and cultural energy striving toward political expression.

10

In the 1920s and early 1930s, industrial workers in technically-advanced plants experienced the transformation of mass production. With the refinement of corporate-directed reorganization came the time-and-motion studies and the line of continuous production. In its demands for labor power, this new form of production created an industrial working class out of the scattered skilled and unskilled sectors; at the same time, it threatened that new class with a tyranny of wage slavery systematized as never before. The response of the class in the first instance was a series of guerrilla actions, local in range and essentially unplanned; the result in the last instance was the formation of the CIO. This was the nearest American counterpart to the European mass party, the proletariat's means of knowing itself and the world.

11

Yet the CIO's organizational strength was already the working class's weakness. Although workers struggled with relative success over the nature of the work process itself, the limitations upon the arbitrary power of Capital to humiliate and degrade the worker also presupposed an internal self-limitation — symbolized and partially embodied in the contract — upon

the free activity of casual strikes and upon direct striving toward the total reorganization of industry. Through the bureaucratization of a growing labor movement and the new conditions of wartime production, the CIO unions themselves became the key agents of industrial discipline. Thus the fulfillment of the IWW's promise was also a reversal, not a declared war on the bourgeoisie carried to a higher stage but a declared peace at uppermost union levels disguising a continuing, local pattern of struggles beneath. The loss of organizing inertia, the internal struggles leading to the "purge" of Red unions and officials, the decline of the official labor movement to the point of no return — all these were foreshadowed in the contradiction between the violent self-expression of the sit-down strikes and the power of hierarchies in labor and government to maneuver the terms of the outcome.

12

The Communist movement, destroyer and replacement of Socialism, reflected the limitations of working-class international activity in the First Moment, and the consequent (and exaggerated) limitations of the Marxist political movements. Retreating first to the defense of the increasingly Stalinized USSR, the Marxist Parties at last fell into the arms of the bourgeoisie in the search for aid against Fascism. The American Third International Party, like the Socialist Party, reflected most of all a sector of the working class on the road to cultural assimilation. Tactically advanced through organizational links within unions, the Party was strategically retrograde relative to the Left Socialists of the previous generation: for Communist leadership the proletariat was only a mechanism for the capture of the State and its replacement by a hierarchy exclusively Communist.

Thus at its upper levels, the Communist movement was symmetrical with the CIO bureaucracy since their mentalities in interpreting the "needs" of workers from above were altogether similar. More naively Stalinist than its sister parties, American Communism moved almost innocently toward acceptance of bourgeois democratic ideals of government reforms and "democratic" warmaking, stultification of class initiatives at decisive points through influence over union tactics, and finally, self-destruction through obeisance to the changing needs of Soviet national defense.

13

After a brief upsurge following World War II, the American working class fell into retreat: a relation between living cost and wages was gained at the expense of decreased control at the point of production. This compromise had two major, inseparable aspects: first the failure of labor to overcome or even successfully resist the new forms of "discipline" supported by union bureaucracy; and second, the development of Imperialism in providing what Lenin had called "bribes" for the "upper strata of the proletariat". These favors to American workers, extended through the development of the modern credit system of consumption, provided an increasing distance between their condition and the conditions of workers in the Third World. To these latter workers passed the initiative for the struggles which would negate the process of corruption and unloose domestic class struggles in full form; toward these Third World struggles, the American Left had no serious orientation and found itself bankrupt in one more key respect.

14

The disintegration of the Left was only superficially of recent origins. While the revolutionary forces had advanced, so those of the counter-revolution had advanced also outside and within the revolutionary camp. Each International, while representing at its inception a more advanced stage, was resolved in a progressively reactionary manner. While the First dissolved, the Second turned toward War-Patriotism and the Third to internal subversion of the Revolution by the professional revolutionaries. In truth, this represented no "revisionism" but only the historic realization of the obstacles confronting world proletarian revolution. After the optimistic mythology of the Nineteenth Century, white, male labor-socialist movement had come the shattering revelation that all the world would move sharply toward transformation, or no part would succeed. In retreating, the Western proletariat inevitably developed from within its own ranks agencies of stabilization and stultification — whether Communist Party bureaucracy in Europe, Labour Party in Britain, or union bureaucracy in America — dependent upon the continuation of a modified, "welfare" class society. To move forward again, the proletariat would have to stand for itself, essentially unrepresented by any formalized vanguard, in the bursting of the new chrysalis which surrounded its efforts.

15

The relative success of the bourgeois economic order and the complexities of intra-class alignments have permitted American Marxism no natural history. Rather, as a doctrine it has existed in a series of sporadic attempts by intellectuals to appropriate Marxist methodology and of ideological parties to

justify their pathetically unworthy claims to inheritance of the body of thought and practice. For Socialists, Marxism had been a simple faith: a reassurance of Capital's greedy nature and inevitable downfall, to be replaced in leadership by some representation of the proletariat. For Communists Marxism was more complex, an internal knowledge which those outside the Party's upper ranks could not possess fully. While the proletariat moved forward, however, no greater numbers joined Left parties. Thus Marxism, born of Marx's conceptions of working class self-development, became in the view of the Marxists increasingly an understanding external to the working class and over it.

16

For American intellectuals as a group, Marxism was even less. The "market-place view of reality" (Williams) reflecting a confidence in bourgeois social relations, permeated thought as nowhere else in the modern intelligentsia. Separated from the clarity of continuous class development toward Socialism, rebellious intellectuals like Charles Beard retained a Jeffersonian framework of understanding, while the bulk of the intellectual community and its mentor Dewey moved toward increasing forms of prediction and social control, mistakenly considered "progressive" or even "radical".

17

Lacking a stable Party or trade-union bureaucracy, or (until recently) a place for Marxists of the Chair, American radicalism was spared the cretinoid intellectuals of Europe (such as Kautsky, Pollitt, and Althusser) who borrowed Marxism from Germany or Russia and set out to preserve it as an undertaker preserves a corpse. At the same time, Americans of

all classes were denied access to even the most common conceptions of Marxist method.

18

Marxist thought in the United States — as a concentrated form of Marxism's ills everywhere — has most of all lacked a critique of culture as the substance of social life, the mediation of understanding and response from classes toward the outside world. If one could believe the self-avowed Left interpreters of the American proletariat, it lived on the job alone or vaporized at home between meager paychecks. Women and children existed less for these observers than for bourgeois society, which drew the lessons of women's subjection early in the century and began to provide a specialized function of socialization and reproduction, mediated through consumption. Similarly, the only vibrant indigenous culture in the United States — that of the blacks — was ignored or rejected by the Left until the Communist movement seized upon and deified its most assimilationist and non-revolutionary aspects.

19

Yet while the Left contemplated life through its economistic lenses, the social relations of the working class bore an increasingly vital relation to its revolutionary potentialities. From a modern work force, an entire world-view must evolve for it to fight effectively against the cultural and physical power of the advanced bourgeois forces. Capitalism creates this world-view through its invasion of the community (and, at last, the individual home) with market relations of the factory. The shared aspects of the scattered cultural experiences in the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries were accented and developed in the United States through market mechanisms (reinforced by social mechanisms such as enforced public education) creating a mass culture such as the world had never seen before.

20

In one sense, Mass Culture embodies the deepest creative force, the unification of a class through common participation in the forms of cultural self-understanding and technical development. (Chaplin's Little Tramp suggests the former; the development of early housework devices suggests the latter.) In another sense, Mass Culture was an opiate that religion could not be for the Twentieth Century: at once a source of relaxation and forgetfulness from the alienating, brutalizing labor of work and the chaotic life of urban society, and a definition of personal and group progress through individualistic accumulation. At its birth around the turn of the century, Mass Culture seemed to promise a total revolutionary experience, shared through the best representation of the masses' lives. In the generations to follow, this Mass Culture was increasingly rationalized as a means for commodity sales and as a weapon against the cultural development of the masses. Despite this general appropriation, however, the tension remained — from the Marx Brothers to Donald Duck — essentially unresolved, pushed further into antagonism by the advance of productive forces and their social reflections.

21

The inner decay of purposelessness and drift — so clear to European Marxists in their own societies of the 1920s — was for the first time the dominant American reality in the 1950s. In reaching the outermost limits of its social and cultural hegemony, the bourgeoisie naively sought to project its future in-

definitely upon the current basis in a population increasingly stripped of traditional protections of alienations (ethnic groups, extended family, older class and neighborhood institutions). Yet the pinnacle of Mass Culture under bourgeois hegemony was also the moment of its decline, since Monopoly Capitalism's Ideal World of the joyfully consuming nuclear family was the ultimate objectification of social life, the empty vessel of alienation for all its members. Thus the vast replication of false images (commodities) could not overcome the undermining of the social system through the self-alienation of its members. The growing antagonism between the increase in the forms of reification and their undermining, Lukacs had noted as early as 1921, was a "key signature to the decline of the bourgeois society". The resurfacing of repressed cultural energy — even in those forms, such as early rock'n'roll, which were essentially archaic expressions of male assertion and dominance — increasingly moved toward that point of conflict in 1950s-1960s America.

22

The open fissures in the Imperial "common interest" were in the first instance universally related to the black population and the gathering crisis in the cities. If the first three decades of the century had marked the metropolitanization of whites and the elaboration of American urban civilization at its peak, the next three decades saw the invasion and partial conquest of these centers of civilization by a people who appeared (to Capitalists and white working-class families alike) as "invaders", disrupters of achievement. In reality, the confinement of blacks to the rural South for a half-century after the Civil War only displaced and delayed the return of massive social contradiction.

For Marx, the City's domination of the countryside

was one of the bourgeoisie's greatest and most progressive social tasks: only that domination could conquer the "isolation and separation" experienced by the rural peasantry. The creation of an urbanized laboring population posed at first a danger, met with the architectural recreation of isolation through the family cells. In the white working-class neighborhoods of the 1920s-1940s, this isolation was maintained among ethnic groups but mitigated within by the extended family and a general ethnic camaraderie. With the retreat of working-class struggle after World War II, white workers were increasingly reisolated by the deterioration of city neighborhoods and the ultimate expansion and isolation in suburbanization. This was an illusory victory for Capital, however. In consuming the countryside, the City began to consume itself, to gut the inner contents of American civilization as it had been known in the Twentieth Century. The intrusion of blacks denoted the City's demise, and the birth of new black cities socially, culturally, politically, and economically dispossessed and disenchanted from all authority. Long recognized as a standing threat to Imperial civilization, by the early 1960s that threat was no longer merely potential.

23

The rise of student struggles in the 1960s building from and expanding on the sectoral dissidence of blacks reflected the emptiness of contemporary life for the heirs apparent to the bureaucratization of society. As blacks expressed in the streets of Harlem and Watts that no leadership of "representation" could ultimately meet their desires, so students in the institutions notoriously the quintessence of bureaucracy revealed in their growing hostility demands for direct participation in university and civil life. In tying black support struggles to student aspirations,

Berkeley pointed the way for a vast international Moment of renewed battles. For the first time, American society revealed itself in advance of Europe in the enormity of decay and in the creation of new forms of revolutionary activity.

24

The New Left in the United States showed itself to be the second Moment of American Marxism, in its apparent contradiction and implied resolution of the first Moment. The struggles of unorganized workers in the first period (1910-20) and of students lay upon opposite sides of the Imperial apex, and reflected their understanding accordingly. If downtrodden immigrants battled for subsistence, students resolutely condemned the price at which abundance was to be obtained, if workers' understanding had in that period been merely particular, limited to the nature and function of work, students' understanding was abstractly universal, limited to an outline of the Empire's functioning; if, finally, workers could as a mass fight only an economistic battle, students could approach no less than a total struggle which failed to comprehend the economic basis of itself and its potential allies. Purified in its isolation, the New Left's class struggle was a revolt of trainee technicians against their trainers and administrators, an impossible struggle which, however, in its generalized critique of bureaucratism, opened the way for its own supersession.

25

The cycle of the political New Left reveals a lengthy history, compressed into a momentary surge and dispersion. Marvelously naive, it became ruthlessly cynical, unconsciously aware of cultural disintegration, it finally joined the representation of that

disintegration (which, it wrongly believed, was its overcoming) in Youth Culture; visionarily democratic, it formed personalities and cults with a speed never surpassed by Marxist political movements. The pace of the New Left revealed not, however, the innate incapacities of the youthful revolutionaries, but the impatience of revolutionary content toward outward forms in the last phase of worldwide class struggle.

26

The New Left experienced only a conscious glimpse of Marxism, but that was most instructive. Reacting against formal deification of the industrial proletariat, its most advanced spokesmen offered a theory (the "New Working Class") which attributed special revolutionary characteristics to the technicians; unable to view Socialism as the end of political society, it held revolution to be no more than the accomplishment of infinite politics ("Organizing") mediated through and justified by ultra-democratic politicians, agitators lacking even the roots in the communities that old Socialist and Communist cadres had had. Unable to unite into its own view the wholeness of the revolutionary process in the growing competence and audacity of the variegated working class, the New Left lapsed into pure rage and irresponsibility (Weatherman), formalized Stalinism (PL and BARU) and at last melancholy. Yet through the militancy of its followers, the New Left established a new stage of mass intervention against Imperialist military action abroad; and through the insistent connection of personal and social liberation, it brought a new consciousness of totality — however distorted in practice — into the revolutionary process.

27

Whereas the appearance of an overtly revolutionary black metropolitan movement in 1968-69 challenged the New Left's relevance to existing domestic oppression, the appearance of a women's movement marked its definitive end. The quest for personal self-liberation, the New Left's keynote, was now most of all exemplified in the lives of politically active women; and against the reality of women's oppression by the Movement itself, its members could only attempt to achieve an impossible self-transformation, dissolve, or repudiate their entire past. Yet, too, the women's movement as a movement united into itself the dynamics of New Left organization and found the living activity of millions of ordinary and non-political women far vaster than their supposed political representation in groups and agitational forms.

28

At the same time, the new level of women's disaffection symptomized the moribund state of bourgeois culture. If the prime ethic of early Capitalism had been hard work and savings, its inevitable social comcomitant ethic was repression of all pleasure for pleasure's sake through the enforcement of stricter formal and informal codes; the recovery of sexuality for the sake of production (most notably, through advertising) denoted the second stage of bourgeois cultural development; and the revolt against alienated "pleasure" and for human content in sexuality heralds the final liberation from repression.

29

With the appearance of automation from the mid-1950s and the beginning of cybernation a half-decade later, the relations of production in class society

meet their outermost limits. Automation, the linking of automatic machines for the production of a finished or semi-finished product, marks negation of working relations in skilled labor before the advent of mass production; at one historical end, the machine is merely an extension of the man's mind and hands; at the other, the worker is no more than an extension of the machine's mechanisms and programmed inclinations. Cybernation completes the progression through computerization, and thus reveals the developments as a new stage of production: while the creation of mass production bridged the gap between archaic and modern production with huge numbers of relatively unproductive workers, and the introduction of the production line and time-and-motion studies in the 1920s and 1930s was the ultimate development in a time of expanding, relatively more productive manpower, the arrival of automation and cybernation is the maximal form of productivity in the period of relatively shrinking manpower. Each development, the product of dead labor (the work of generations of mental and manual workers in improving production), impoverished the lives of workers as workers (despite the relative counter-acting force of union organization) according to Marx's formula: The more workers produce, the less they themselves become.

30

Yet the increasing revolt against alienated relations, groping toward greater levels of self-organization, denotes the first phase of Capitalism's final stage.

In response to the mass production at the time of the First Moment, workers instinctively threw up mass strikes for decent, human conditions. Against the intensification of production and the establishment of totalitarian relations in the factories, workers demanded also the negotiability of the conditions of

production. Against the final mutilation of the worker that is represented by automation and cybernation, workers began to respond by movements against the nature of production itself. The threat to the very tolerability of work posed by automation was first met, in the 1950s, by a strike against management and unions alike: the wildcat. From these beginning local, guerrilla actions, there can be only one logical conclusion: the birth of workers' councils aimed at appropriation of production into the hands of the producers.

31

Meanwhile, the changes in the composition of the working class create an increasingly hostile force, developed through struggles which are in form sectoral, but in content demands for the entire class. Young workers in production have already become notorious in their intolerance of "discipline" (from the bosses' point of view). Meanwhile, a newly proletarianized sector of college-trained workers increasingly voices its desire to shift the direction of production toward social, human ends — or to abandon it entirely. The increase of women workers to over twenty million, especially in white-collar occupations, establishes a mighty force which — individually vocal or otherwise — proves in its demands the universality of the proletariat from the factory floors to the offices and the thoroughgoing cultural implications of class struggle. The crucial development of black sectors at the very heart of production provides Capitalism with its most immediate fear, and with good reason: the struggles of blacks, more than any other sectoral struggle, have demonstrated the archaicism of unions and all devices short of revolutionary transformation to provide the necessary changes.

To note these is not to deny intra-sectoral hostili-

ties which pose obstacles toward united effort; but it is to suggest that more and more, those forces with the perceptions of having least to gain socially and culturally from Capitalism's continuance find themselves increasingly at the center of production. In the strike wave of our period — unknown in its dimensions since 1946 — the efforts by industrial workers to maintain living conditions were joined by a vast white-collar striving to gain the simple decency and implied power that new unionization or strengthened unionization would mean. At last, this seemingly economistic struggle poses already the turning of quantity into quality, for the unsatisfied demands of those long at work are joined to those newer forces of sectoral power — Youth, women, and Third World — which demand the supersession of the relations of production themselves.

32

To make these claims is not to announce the imminence of revolution nor the certainty of its development at any stage; rather, it is to express the necessary and inevitable qualities which lie along the path toward transformation. The challenge for a declining bourgeoisie to the working class is unprecedented: it seeks to destroy the relation between living costs and wages entirely; and thereby to set back the relative advance of the working class to pre-unionization levels. The demands of the working class are equally unprecedented: minimally, a new level of financial expectation based on the real exchange value of their products; and maximally, a refusal to accept the further degradation of the conditions of production.

33

The Socialism of the working class is not an end in itself but only the means taken to reorganize the pro-

duction of life's necessities (including work itself); the fruit of Socialism is the potentiality released by that reorganization. Thus Socialism is not a goal moved toward but an increasingly present socialization of response and felt attitude of confidence and solidarity. Unity may no longer be deceptively achieved through the suppression of racial and sexual tendencies: success lies only through a redefinition of race and sexuality through the parameters of struggle. In full force, the working class represents those forces throughout the world which in seeking identity have necessarily sought the transformation of all society and of themselves. Thus what the French forces of May-June, 1968 proclaimed abstractly ("All power to the Imagination"), American conditions demand concretely of all militants: far more than the reorganization of production, the reorganization of all that society has meant.

34

The social life within the United States poses difficult but not insurmountable obstacles to the victory of its truly productive forces. Historically, Americans have been surrounded by a hitherto unknown social plenty and personal liberty, and have naturally felt exempt from the cruel fate of mankind. Uniquely free in practical life, their theoretical conceptions of self have been naive and obsessive, insistent upon the realization of society's possibilities without the mass transformation of class struggle. As the youngest people of the industrialized West, their obstacles appeared naturally overcome through encroachments upon Nature through the development of mass society armed with agricultural and industrial skills. Only in the Twentieth Century do those skills, under the control of Monopoly Capital, turn upon themselves to undermine the achievements of all American Civili-

zation and render them into their opposite: a standing threat to the future of the world's population.

In the Twentieth Century, Americans find themselves in the technologically oldest culture of the world, and before its fragmentation in the 1960s perhaps the most totalitarian in everyday life. Devoted increasingly to surplus production in maintaining the irrationality of Capitalist social relations, modern leaders of American society have willingly created a surplus population all but forced toward crime and degradation in search for economic decency and self-definition. In attempting to forestall revolutionary struggle, these leaders seek the self-fulfilled prophecy of a surplus population becoming sub-human in the eyes of the alienated but "functioning" working population. Alas for such plans, humanity's vision of a promiseful future is asserted eloquently behind the thickest prison walls.

35

Philosophy begins, Hegel tells us, when "a race for the most part has left its concrete life, when separation and change of class have begun, and the people approach toward their fall, when a gulf has arisen between inward strivings and external reality, and the old forms of Religion, etcetera, are no longer satisfying." The birth of true wisdom of Americans about their society — and consequently, about themselves — begins only when the Empire's decline is a foregone certainty: only through that fall as an Imperial People do Americans rejoin the upward struggles of humanity.

36

Marxism in the United States, therefore, only now draws its first breath as a thoroughgoing system of thought. Vast groundwork in the comprehension of

method and the application to classes remains to be laid. Yet we may specify in a general sense the tasks ahead:

First, Marxism must illuminate the internal reorganization which flows objectively from progressive development of the means of production and points objectively (through the growth of revolutionary struggle) toward the accomplishment of a new society. This remains the central task of class analysis.

Second, Marxism must discover the practical basis in all modern life for the participation of masses of people in the transformation of culture. This revealed social nature of "personal" experience, and the reshaping of mass experience by the transformation of the individual toward a realization of potential full humanity, is what Marx understood to be mankind's achievement of its species being. This is, indeed, the last major task of social theory, the comprehension of the historical process which ends in the appearance of true freedom and self-realization. Only with this comprehension, and the concrete negation of the character of life in class society, can the bonds be snapped and humanity released — as Surrealism has understood — toward an apocalyptic future.

37

The problems of Marxism are the problems of our lives: the movement toward resolution of antimonies, "personal" and "social", through self-conscious activity. Work, thought (intellectuality), and the pursuit of Culture will not be dissolved by Socialism: they are already undergoing dissolution. Work becomes play, thought activity, Culture the meaning of all existence past and present. These are the realities that a whole society moves toward, whatever adulterated forms it first reaches. Through changes in our lives, we may view the new world; through operation

of society as a whole, we may view the reorganization of daily life.

38

While the abstract terms of the Questions of Organization — the relationship between spontaneity and organization — remain constant in revolutionary theory, the concrete resolution is unique for each new period. True to Lenin's understanding, the activity of the masses is basic in creating new forms of social transformation; the activity of the Party, or group, lies in understanding and properly aiding the self-realization of these new forms.

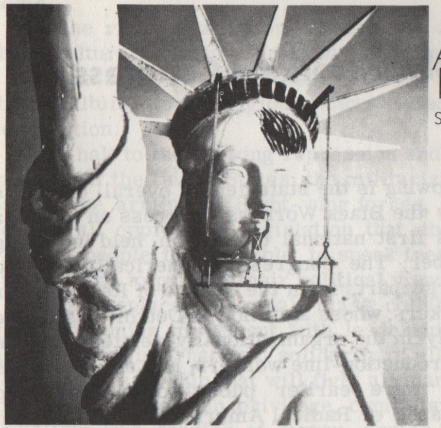
Socialists, Communists, and other politicized activists in the United States have generally considered the self-activity of the masses secondary to political control over the revolutionary process, and yet themselves have remained subject to the laws of self-organization. While mass organizations grow in militancy, radicals rise to power or influence; but when militancy declines, radicals are isolated and driven to political compromise of their principles or to persecution and political ineffectuality. The sectarian political faiths — so essential to the radicals as individuals — have in general proven less important than the skills and contacts gained by training in any mass oriented, Left organization. More than anywhere else, the political expression of revolutionary fervor has remained an afterthought to militant workers and a temporary, less-than-lifetime activity of the bulk of "professional revolutionists".

Over the last half-century, the particular determinations of the Second and Third Internationals have alike shown themselves unequal to the new problems of mass society; nowhere has this been as apparent as in the United States, where political radicals remained a miniscule minority able to express influence over masses only indirectly. Now, in the midst

of converging revolutionary possibilities, we see the necessity for a leap as great as Lenin's leap, toward a "new kind" of political formation. This formation will in fact propose not only the last (before the revolution) but also the first mode appropriate to the fully developed revolutionary forces in modern (and consequently, in American) society.

39

The Marxism of the past may easily be distinguished from ours, for it unconsciously proclaims struggle toward parts of the new existence at the expense of achievement of the whole: the supposed fulfillment of class liberation against the no less universal liberation of race and sexuality; the supposed fulfillment of race and sexual liberation through another mediation than class struggle. Against the Marxists of the Past we insist that new forms of self-organization, undreamed of by them, will follow, that humanity can recover its self in History, and that the process is underway without their help, or it has already been lost.



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Over 30, under siege & left of center stage

Black Workers Congress

The following is the statement of overall objectives adopted by the Black Workers Congress on the occasion of its first national convention, held in Chicago in September. The Congress is generically descendant, in large part, from the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, whose agitation in Detroit has figured prominently in the organizationally-related struggles of black production-line workers, and some of whose documents were earlier published in the "Black Worker" issue of Radical America (Volume 5, Number 2). The Black Workers Congress document underlines the interdependence of Third World liberation and the achievement of a socialist society. The Congress's headquarters is at 8824 Fenkell, Detroit, Michigan 48238.

Our Objectives

(1) Workers' control of their places of work — the factories, mines, fields, offices, transportation services and communication facilities — so that the exploitation of labor will cease and no person or corporation will get rich off the labor of another person, but all people will work for the collective benefit of humanity.

(2) An elimination of all forms of racism and the right of self-determination for African people, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Asians, and Indians who live in the United States and Puerto Rico.

(3) The elimination of all forms of oppression of

women in all phases of society, on the job and in the home.

(4) The right of all people to express and develop their cultural heritage throughout the United States.

(5) The right of all people to express and develop their cultural and religious views without fear of persecution.

(6) A halt to the growing repression and increasing fascism of the United States, the militarization of the police, the arming of Right-wing forces, and the repeal of all oppressive legislation that abolishes the right of people to assemble, to speak freely, to have privacy, and to publish their political views.

(7) The replacement of all class collaborators in the trade-union movement with leadership that will fight for the international solidarity of all oppressed people, a leadership that will fight all manifestations of racism, white-skin privilege, capitalism, and imperialism (the sending of money, armed forces, and Christian missionaries from one country to another for the purpose of exploiting and oppressing its workers). This leadership must demand real equality for women in employment.

(8) The creation in the labor movement of revolutionary black caucuses, Chicano and Puerto Rican revolutionary caucuses, Third World labor alliances, independent revolutionary union movements and other forms of revolutionary labor association that will seek to break the stranglehold of the reactionary labor bureaucrats and the capitalistic class collaborators that help to prevent the working-class people from understanding their historic role in controlling the means of production.

(9) A twenty-four hour work week where all the people of the United States will be employed and have the necessary funds for food, clothing, shelter, and the right to improve their standard of living and enjoy the benefits of an industrialized society.

(10) Thirty days of paid vacation time each year for all workers including women in the home and the use of all resort areas and the creation of new ones for working-class people and the elimination of special privileges at resort areas for any group of people.

(11) An elimination of speed-up, compulsory overtime, unsafe working conditions, inadequate medical facilities on the job, brutality and terror in the mines, factories, and industrial plants of the United States and Puerto Rico.

(12) That all people in the United States engage in productive work for the benefit of all the people in the world. Parasitic capitalistic vultures must be eliminated and all people who are outside of the work force must have jobs so that there will be no need for prostitution, pimps, dope pushers and addicts, gamblers, hustlers, winos — all creatures of the capitalistic system.

(13) An elimination of the trash and violence perpetuated on the mass media and the right of all people to use the radio and television networks to express and develop their cultural forms.

(14) An end to the pollution of the atmosphere, forests, trees, rivers, and living quarters of all the people by the giant corporations who have no regard for the people and whose owners can fly away to islands in the Caribbean to avoid pollution or jet-set to Latin America and Africa, parts of Asia, and other areas.

(15) Adequate free public-health facilities in all communities; adequate free hospitals, free doctor's care, and improved working conditions for nurses and hospital aides.

(16) Sufficient free twenty-four-hour day-care centers in all communities so that mothers and fathers will be able to engage in other work and activities and the care of children will be socialized and their education will train them to work for humanity

and not for their selfish, individual aspirations.

(17) Free education from pre-school through all levels of college and university training and control of the educational facilities by the people.

(18) Safe, clean, uncrowded housing where there are no rats and roaches, crumbling walls, falling ceilings, and garbage piled up from insufficient public garbage disposal.

(19) Abolition of the brutal penal system of the United States and the establishment of people's reorientation centers for those who misunderstand the workers' society and commit crimes against the people.

(20) The immediate release of all prisoners from the archaic jail system of the United States, many of whom are political prisoners in the traditional sense of the word, but all of whom are there because of the unjust historical development and practices of a capitalistic society.

(21) A withdrawal of all United States troops from overseas countries and a total dismantling of the military force of the United States.

(22) Elimination and smashing of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence Agency, the counter-insurgency forces and research activities that have terrorized the population of the United States and the people of the world.

(23) A destruction of all the armed, vicious, brutal militaristic police forces in the United States that kill people at random, terrorize the population, and the establishment of a people's militia. There will be no need for an armed police force and military personnel, FBI or CIA, with workers control of the means of production, transport services and communication facilities.

(24) Reparations from the United States government and all white racist institutions in the United States. We further demand that the United States government pay reparations to the people of Africa,

Latin America, and Asia whom it has exploited for centuries.

(25) The withdrawal of all United States investment in South Africa.

(26) The immediate ending of the aggressive war in Indo-China.

(27) The right of the Palestinian people to their homeland in the Middle East.

(28) The ending of the exploitation of workers in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean by Western powers such as the US, France, England, Portugal, Belgium, Israel.

(29) The ending of the trade blockade of Cuba.

(30) The admission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations and the control of Formosa by the Chinese government of the mainland.

(31) A rational planning of a world economic system that will eliminate racism, wars, hunger, disease, lack of housing, oppression of women, class antagonisms, and big-nation chauvinism.

(32) The creation of a genuine revolutionary workers party in the United States under the leadership of Third World workers, men and women, employed and unemployed, who will be guided by the accumulated wisdom of all revolutionary thinkers, and who will work untiringly to implement the objectives of the International Black Workers Congress.

We Urge

(1) The systematic study of revolutionary theory and the experiences of revolutionary movements and socialist nations so that we might learn from them, but in our learning we must at all times remember that we must apply all theory to the concrete realities of the United States. We live in the most industrialized nation of the world, a country that oppresses the majority of the people of the world. Any revolutionary theory that we cannot apply, cannot adjust to

our concrete realities, will not be of much value, but all revolutionary theory in some form can be modified, extended, applied, interpreted to fit the needs of the revolutionary forces in the United States.

(2) Creative discussion in a non-antagonistic manner about the future of the world in which we want to live and the methods to achieve these objectives. People's leisure time should be spent in discussing, reading, and working for the new world. Above all we must try to build the new world in order to learn how to build it.

(3) A systematic attack on all the control mechanisms of United States society. Our efforts will never be successful if we do not engage in practical, day-to-day struggle against all the controls that the capitalists have erected to maintain their rule. The concept of citizenship in the United States, the educational system, the mass media, the dogma and practices of the Christian church, the welfare system, the courts and the administration of justice, the profit motive system and upward mobility, the love of life and fear of death, the lack of job security, inadequate payment of wages and consumer credit, the practices of the reactionary trade union leadership, the denial of adequate health and medical facilities, dope in our communities, the downgrading and denial of the cultural heritage of Third World people, the poverty program and other counter-insurgency forms, the thievery of the land of Third World people.

All these and other forms of control must be systematically attacked, and the greater the unity in the attack, the greater the results and the quickening of the revolutionary process, for only when there is conflict against the control mechanisms of the society will there be change, and only the movement for change can produce revolutionary ferment and results.

(4) The uniting of all Third World revolutionary forces. Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, black people, Indians, and Asians have too long been divided from each other, and the exploiters have benefited from our disunity. We have all lived under the yoke of racism and economic exploitation. We have all suffered at the hands of the white imperialist powers and we have seen our native lands devastated, raped, and pillaged, our mothers and sisters brutalized, our fathers cringe from the white master's whip lash. The forces that oppress us are our major contradictions. Between us there are antagonisms, but these must be resolved through discussion and we must unite as one mighty force in this racist land called the United States of America and help to build a new world without racism, hunger, disease, exploitation in all forms, a world of sisters and brothers.

We Pledge

(1) To keep our revolutionary commitment under all the harsh forms that repression and mounting fascism will take in the United States.

(2) To work untiringly to fulfill our objectives.

(3) To help create a world where all people will call each other sisters and brothers out of genuine love of each other.

ATTICA

Most of the brothers
were prisoners before they came
survivors
of a war with no victors
and many deaths.

They hurt themselves
and those who loved them
trying to be men
and
failing

But there, with the cold ring of steel
and the loneliness,
the clouds began to lift
the pain made sense
and the mad visions sort themselves out
into dreams of rekindled life.

A thousand men,
who had fought alone all their lives
linked arms
invited death to chase the demons
and found a freedom
their captors never knew.

Mark Naison